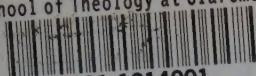


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THE SECRET OF LIVING



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# THE SECRET OF LIVING

BY

J. BRIERLEY

AUTHOR OF

"LIFE AND THE IDEAL," "ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUAL," "SIDELIGHTS  
ON RELIGION," "OURSELVES AND THE UNIVERSE," ETC.

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## PREFACE

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THE secret of living, of living at least in the twentieth century, cannot be treated as though it were a single problem, open to one solution. Life offers itself to us in an infinity of aspects, each proposing its own question. In the vast variety of experiences comprised in even an average human career, the danger is to regard a success in one department as a success over the whole. But we may win a battle and lose a campaign. We may, like Rupert at Marston Moor, carry all before us in one part of the field, and wind up the day with a total defeat. Accordingly, in treating the various subjects which appear in this volume ; in treating of work, of time, of money, of social life, of religious beliefs ; of the thirty odd themes in fine which are here discussed, we have gone on the supposition that, while each side of life carries its own enigma, which it is for us to solve, the secret of living as a whole is to be sought deeper down. It lies not in any sectional skills or acquisitions, valuable as these are in themselves, but in an attitude of the soul. In the final result the secret of living is to be found in the soul's mastery of itself and of its world.



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# I

## WORK

THE world's evil is the world's riddle ; *das qual-voll uralte Räthsel*, as Heine calls it. To get to the bottom of it, philosophers, scientists, theologians, from their several starting-points, have performed miracles of excavation ; digging, delving, and boring, to lose themselves one after another in the process. There are no signs yet of reaching the bottom. Why is the world so imperfect ; why such impediments between us and our desires ; why, with such infinite possibilities, such small capacities ; why, with a world so rich and strong, could not the Creator have gone a step further and made us all rich and strong ? We get no complete answers to these questions. We read Plato's solution, that man's creation represents a fall into matter from a height above it ; and that of Leibnitz, that in the conditions of finitude this is the best of possible worlds ; and all else that has been said—and still we are not satisfied. We never shall be, perhaps for the reason that man cannot afford to be satisfied ; that dissatisfaction is one of his assets, part of his working capital. But there is no reason why he should not keep working at the solution, though his movement may be as an asymptote to a curve, which ever

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approaches but never finally reaches. Yet there is one view of this matter which has hardly had the attention it deserves, either from philosophy or religion ; which, while by no means clearing up our problem, yet, properly grasped and used, carries us a long way ; helps us at least to catch a glimpse at the secret of living. It is the simple statement that life means work. Our being's end, its true happiness, lies there. We have no perfection, because it is not perfection but the striving for it, the reaching after something yet beyond, that fits us best. To arrive at a point where we had to stop because there was nothing more to be done, imagine that as a destiny ! It is too horrible to think of. The nethermost hell, with a chance of working our way out of it, would be vastly better.

This, to some ears, may sound strange, but let us think a little. Suppose yourself placed in the most enchanting paradise the imagination can conceive ; a city whose streets are gold and whose gates are pearl. A country where eternal summer reigns, where every want is met ; no poverty, no hunger, no death, no burden. And you are there with nothing to do ! You sit, because there is no end to be achieved by walking. You are still, because all the ends for activity have been accomplished. You are to sit there for eternity ! A good hour of that would bore most of us to extinction. No, that is not our happiness, in this or any world we can conceive. Put your children into the most gorgeous of palaces and tell them it is theirs, but they are not to move. How they would long for a coal-cellar with something to do in it ! Well, our earth is

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to some a palace and to others a coal-cellar, but the one overwhelming point is that there is something to do in it !

It is when we study this one consideration, in its length and breadth, that we see how false are many of the current estimates, how false many of our social ambitions ; how we continually miss the real secret of living. The thing we need to strive after, for ourselves and our fellows, is not possession, but activity ; the proper conditions of it, the enlargement of its scope, the reinforcement of its powers. Montesquieu quotes a traveller who had seen many lands, and who, on being asked what seemed man's chief object in life, said he found everywhere a general tendency to laziness. To that cynical observation we most of us should laughingly agree. But observe. What we call laziness is mainly an activity of some sort, though it go no higher than the consumption of tobacco or the swallowing of quarts of beer. The point is that man can never rest in one state. It must be an eternal going on. On the journey we do not want the motor to break down. The scenery is lovely, but we are hungry for the next mile. The story in the book entrances us, but what a cruelty to debar us from the next page ! In our most placid mood we want to pass from thought to thought, from this sensation to another. Our pleasures, our most passionate joys, are a movement ; to stay it at where we are were to spoil all. Our whole living is under this law. The action of a mineral poison is by stopping the change and decay of the tissues. To stay this activity, even this activity of decay, is death.

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That life, in its best form, is not possession, but activity, is seen at whatever point we meet it. The great possessors know that well. Marcus Aurelius was born in the purple, born to an empire. But observe the things he valued. Was it his possession of riches and luxuries? Says he: "From my tutor I learned endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands." Goethe, speaking of the splendid life of palaces, with which he was familiar, says: "To my own nature this is quite repugnant. In a splendid abode like that which I had at Carlsbad I am at once lazy and inactive. On the contrary, a small residence like this poor apartment in which we now are, and where a sort of disorderly order—a sort of gipsy fashion—prevails, suits me exactly. It allows my inner nature full liberty to act, and to create from itself alone." Of a like mind was Schiller, that twin brother of his in Germany's creative literature. Writing to Huber, he says: "I want nothing but a bedroom, which might also be my working room; and another chamber for receiving visits." He wants them plainly furnished, and adds: "With these conveniences my circumstances will be sufficiently provided for." His circumstances! What did they matter? His joy was in his work; not in receiving, but in giving, in pouring out upon the world the glorious products of his mind and soul.

That this is the one supreme law for ourselves is the more evident when we remember that it is the one law of all nature. There is no such thing in nature as absolute inertia. The most seemingly stable things are full of movement. *Panta rēi*, everything



## Work

is in flux, said Heraclitus. Modern science has given to the old Greek's words a confirmation which would have amazed him. The solid matter which stands there in cliffs and mountains is composed of atoms that are centres of force, with electrons whirling round in their orbit with inconceivable velocity. And observe that nature's law is everywhere one of giving, of giving with what seems to us a more than royal prodigality. Think of the energy poured out by the sun into the waste spaces of the universe ! Our earth receives the minutest fraction of it. And of what it does receive so little of it seems to be used. Experiments have shown that in the most favourable circumstances a plant-leaf changes only about one-fiftieth of the radiant energy it receives into chemical energy. And the great orb is pouring on to the earth millions of foot-tons of energy which we at present are too ignorant to turn to account. It does this, patiently waiting the time when our descendants will have learned to harness it to our machinery, and to make it our giant of all work. The world's work is always going on. When we are resting, our nature is not resting. In our sleep the heart is pumping, the lungs are respiring, our brain-cells are busy repairing the wastes and losses of the day. Often when the conscious "we" is doing least, our unconscious "we" is doing most—that unconscious "we," our true guardian angel, which never sleeps, which never relaxes from its faithful toil.

If this be a true statement, it has surely an important bearing upon our social outlooks and endeavours. We see here how the Gospel becomes

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scientific. The maxim, "It is better to give than to receive," and the statement that man, in his highest representative, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," cease to be mere saws of the pulpit ; they stand as representing the cosmic law, the ultimate secret of living. And, if so, there is only one thing to be done ; it is for society to train its units accordingly. In our new social programme there is, of course, a question of possession—a wide and deep one—but it is subordinate to something wider and deeper, the question of activity, of work. For that will be the bedrock of the new social structure. What money a man has in the bank ; whether he holds land on lease or in fee simple ; whether he dines in a palace or eats his chunk by the roadside ; all these things are, for the human question, for the happiness question, as nothing compared with the work he is doing, and the conditions under which he is doing it. For the secret of his living, we repeat, is just that of getting all of him to work, and in the right way—his body to work, his mind to work, and his soul to work.

His body. Are we to consider ourselves educated until we can do things with our hands ? We shall have to get rid of the detestable superstition which regards any kind of manual labour as menial. There is no husband worth the name who cannot wash dishes or make beds on occasion. Louis Philippe once said that one of the qualifications for being King of France was that of being able to black his own boots. It was a jesting reference to the instability of a French throne ; but it is an excellent teaching for

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kings and dignitaries generally. If we are capable of service—even if it be in blacking boots—we are all right; without that capacity there is nothing right. We like that idea of the old Jewish rabbis, of adding manual labour to their professional duties. We like to hear of Rabbi Joshua as a needlemaker, of Rabbi Judah as a baker, of Rabbi Simeon as a carpet-maker. St. Paul followed that good tradition as a weaver of goat's hair. The early Benedictines were on the same line when to their *rôle* as preachers and writers they added that of skilled agriculturists, turning many waste places of barbaric Europe into Edens of beauty and fertility. These people believed in the healthy exercise of their whole nature. They found the secret of living there.

The signs are that, as the world progresses, the rougher kinds of manual toil will be superseded, giving place to the action of nature-forces under the guidance of the intellect. Man will work more and more with his upper part. Our sowing, our reaping, our threshing, our travelling, are done by the machine. Work is such a different thing to different people. The old-time labourer thought the mere mentalist a loafer, with a too easy job. The present writer, once, in country lodgings, after a hard day at his books, by way of relaxation busied himself with a spade in the garden. "Ah," said his farmer host, "I see that you are taking to a bit of work!" He was astonished when I told him I called this rest. When we have organised the nature-forces to a degree beyond our present knowing, man will be as busy as ever. He will have a chance then to call into play a host of

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powers that at present are, for the most part, dormant. We talk of our untapped stores of coal and iron, but what of that immense reserve of the human intellect at present hid away in our untaught, undeveloped millions, waiting to be called forth by a wider opportunity, a truer education? A single idea of a single brain is mightier than Niagara, for it can chain and use it. What, then, will be the ultimate force of the myriad brains that will by and by come to their strength and empire?

~~But~~ there is an activity beyond that both of the body and the intellect. It is that of the soul. Men only half-live to-day because of the idleness of their best nature. With a bewildering rush at the circumference there is a fatal inertia at the centre. For after all it is by the soul's activity that we reach life's ultimate secret. And the proof of this is seen when we find people full of bodily strength and of intellectual gifts often amongst the most unhappy, while men and women whose health has gone and whose mental powers are crippled, from their invalid couches are crying "Victory!" It is where the soul is busy, busy in the right direction, that we find triumphant living. It is the soul that puts values on life. One of its highest activities is that of appreciation. It was said of Diderot that in his invariable optimism he was like one of the old alchemists, who always found gold in his crucible because he had first put it there. And that is what the instructed soul learns to do. For life consists always of what we put into it. You have always to give in order to receive. I take a cup of cold water, and drink it without



# Work

thinking. How much more precious will it be to me if I bring some thought and appreciation to it ; if I reflect what this draught would be in the Sahara Desert, or if it were the last I could ever partake of ! When you look out of the window on a spring morning and taste the air, and take in the green of the field and the blue of the sky, are not three-fourths of the beauty of all that the product of your own soul, of the mind's knowledge, of the heart's gratitude ? Your world is every day of your making. If it is a good, a glorious world, it is because you bring to it the spiritual capacity,

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
To hold infinity in a palm of the hand  
And eternity in an hour.

If there is anything in what has here been said, it should help us to see the true goal of the human striving. The world is a world for workers. We are here for that, and to find our happiness in that. It is left imperfect in order that we may add to it our contribution. And because this is so, our social programme should be one which first and foremost aims at the liberation of the workers ; at the development of every human faculty, bodily, mental and spiritual, to their highest point, and to their truest harmony. Here is the secret of living and of possessing. For man's true possession is, after all, the possession of himself.

## II

### TALK

A MAN is only half himself until he has found his brother man. Eve, according to tradition, shortened man's residence in Paradise. But the garden would have been no Paradise without her. Our soul comes to its life by virtue of the brother souls that surround it. It is to them we owe our language, our writing, our music, our work, our play, our peace, our war, our differences, our unities. Alone we should cease to be human. We should know nothing of the world ; nothing even of ourselves. Nature made us social. She has an odd way of putting us into positions without telling us beforehand anything about them. Without informing us as to the duties and responsibilities of the social life, she began by placing us in a family. One of the first things we learn is to talk, and to listen to talk. And we have been talking and listening, on and off, ever since. Think of the number of speeches we have made, of the words that have rolled off our tongues since then ! A queer retrospect, when we come to think of it, with so much in it that was hardly golden ! The world is carried on under a babel of utterance. Had we a universal telephone, and could hear it all—on the boulevards of Paris, in the cafés of Vienna, on the Exchange of London, in

## Talk

the bazaars of Constantinople ;—the talk in drawing-rooms, in the streets, in the palaces of kings, in one-roomed homes—the harvest of one hour would be a literature, a unique human chronicle. There it is, such as it is, going on at this moment. There it is, forming characters, shaping destinies, making happiness and misery, the most tremendous thing in life, and yet the thing of which, in any deep sense, we take the least account. As we dressed ourselves this morning, did any of us think seriously as to the style and shape our day's conversation was to take, from what sources it was to be drawn, in what spirit it was to be carried on ?

We are speaking here of our extempore utterance—the largest part of utterance. The diplomatist who is about to meet a foreign ambassador, the orator who has to address to-night a crowded audience, will doubtless go carefully over what he has to say. But most of our speech is not oratory, nor high politics. It is ourselves in undress, the word of the moment. Yet it is precisely here, in what we say and hear said in ordinary intercourse, in the ceaseless giving and receiving of the mind's small change, we have the formative influences that make or mar us. Compared with this, as an influence on character, the great, carefully considered deliverances are as the effect of the occasional thunderstorm to the ceaseless work upon us of the ordinary atmosphere. What a man says to his wife or his child at the dinner-table reveals him more surely than his finest eloquence from pulpit or rostrum.

It reveals, because it shows us at unawares : shows,

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not what we wish to be, not what we want the world to think of us, but what at the moment we are. Not that the revelation will necessarily be a discreditable one. If it discloses sometimes our worst, it often shows our best. Grant and Lee were both great men, and had done great things. But nothing to us is more interesting or delightful than the story of their meeting at the Appomattox courthouse. For years they had been deadly foes. They had commanded opposing armies, which had inflicted enormous slaughter on each other. Their meeting now was at the crisis of their lives. Yet at sight of each other, what happened? A beautiful and entirely human thing. To each of them rushed memories of earlier days, when they were together as comrades at West Point and in Mexico. Their talk ran on old times, till at last Lee had to call Grant's attention to the object of their gathering, which was to surrender his beaten army to him, the conqueror! Their actual contact revealed what years of bloody warring could not wash out—that they were friends who esteemed each other. It is precisely this actual contact, this beating of heart close to heart, that destroys enmity. It was the fortune of the present writer to form one of a quartette who spent many days together in Norway. The other members were an Anglican canon, a Roman Catholic priest, and a Unitarian layman. We formed the happiest society, in which we discovered to our continual wonderment what a vast area of common ground our souls occupied. "If we go on like this," it was remarked, "what is to become of all our political, our theological, and our ecclesiastical animosities?"

## Talk

What, indeed ! The secret of the coming world unity will lie in getting men together and in letting them talk at large.

Our main thought here is of the ethic of intercourse, but we must not forget that there is, or rather has been, an art of it. Conversation, in our day, seems to have ceased to be a fine art. Perhaps we talk less because we do more. It was said of Moltke that he was silent in seven languages. Wellington was no talker. When called in as one of the chief advisers of the young Queen, he found himself at a loss. He complained to a friend : " I have no small talk, and Peel has no manners ! " But the world has had its great talkers. If only we could recover some of it, what a literature should we have ! Socrates said his best things in dialogue ; the " Symposium " of Plato gives us a hint of what those Greeks could do. The Gospels give us fragments of the talks of Jesus. If only we could get a full report ! And if there had been a Boswell at table when Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, and the other great spirits of the time met at the " Mermaid," we should have had something as good as their comedies and tragedies. As a sheer art conversation reached its highest level, in modern times at least, in the period just before the French Revolution. In the salons of Mme. du Deffand and Mlle. de Lespinasse the French wit and brilliance flashed as never before or since. We are told of Diderot's conversation that it showed a verve, a wealth of ideas, a rushing, cumulative force that even his writings do not reveal. And across the Rhine at Sans Souci, where D'Holbach, Voltaire, Algarotti,



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and the great Frederick kept the ball rolling, a listener tells us that if the talk could have been put into a book, it would have equalled the finest literature. It was said of Mme. de Staël that, while not physically attractive, she could subdue any man if she talked to him for a quarter of an hour. How thankful we are that Johnson had his Boswell, and Goethe his Eckermann! What multitudes have delighted in the outflow of those rich minds over the dinner-table who are ignorant of "Rasselas," and who know nothing of the great German's "Theory of Colours"!

Some of the greatest passages in history were talk, or what arose out of it. We may well believe that some of the divinest things in the Fourth Gospel were spoken over the supper-table in the upper chamber at Jerusalem. That must have been a memorable meal at Thermopylæ when Leonidas said to his friends, "Let us go to breakfast, as we shall sup in Hades." What a talk, too, was that at the last banquet of the Girondists in the prison of the Abbaye, with the guillotine waiting for them on the morrow, when the noble Vergniaud thrilled his companions with a discourse on the immortality of the soul! One would have liked to hear what Milton said to Galileo when he visited him in Italy. "There it was that I found and visited Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought."

Religion, which begins first in the thought and feeling of some heaven-inspired soul, has found in every age its most effectual form of propagation in free, unfettered talk. Christianity was spread in this way

## Talk

before anything was written. We get a vivid idea of what went on in that passage of Irenæus on Polycarp : " I can tell, also, the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse . . . and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord." One of the, to us, most refreshing things in Early Church history is the description given by Gregory Thaumaturgus of the spiritual fellowship enjoyed in the circle which had gathered round the beloved Origen. He found, he says, in these fellow-students " the true kinsmen of his soul." The day on which he met Origen was to him " the first day to me, the most precious of all days, since then for the first time the true sun began to rise upon me. For he [Origen] was possessed of a certain sweet grace and persuasiveness, along with a strange power of constraint." He speaks of their community as " that sacred fatherland where the sacred laws are declared, . . . and where by day and night we are still occupied with what the soul has seen and handled, and where the inspiration of Divine things prevails over all continually."

Here was talk, the free outflow of a great soul, which fashioned men into saints and heroes. The Puritans were not afraid of religious conversation. Calamy said of Baxter that " he talked about another world like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it." We remember that a similar remark is made by Erasmus concerning Sir Thomas More. It was in the free intercourse of the Common Room at Lincoln

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College that Methodism was started. And later, in the Oriel Common Room, Newman's movement began. It is here, in this frank encounter of man with man, more than in set speech, that your spiritual genius shows himself. Of one of Wesley's intensest prophets of the second generation, William Bramwell, we read how he held whatever company he entered enthralled by the highest themes of inward religion. He would suffer nothing else. If another topic were introduced he would say: "Now we are wandering from the point," and lead them back to the one subject. What an armchair companion for the smoking room of a modern West-end club! In the early days of the Plymouth Brethren there was an Exeter dentist of whom it was said that "he had the habit of dropping sentences which changed people's lives!" These men were of the temper of that William Allen, the Quaker, who with another "Friend" journeyed to St. Petersburg to interview Tsar Alexander on religious subjects; actually gained admission to the autocrat, conversed with him on spiritual things, and left him profoundly impressed.

We do not get much of that type of conversation now. It is as if the things discussed no longer existed. And yet they do exist, and they are worth talking about. On the whole, one must admit that while the world has progressed in many ways, it shows little improvement in the matter of social intercourse. In some aspects of it it has gone backward. Where now do we get talk like that of Johnson or Goethe, or that of the French salon in the ante-Revolution days? How much of our fellowship is, so far as any

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intellectual or spiritual product is concerned, a sheer waste of time—that most precious of our possessions ! How often it is a mere gabble, and a venomous gabble at that ! One can understand the action of the society lady who remained always to the end of a function, because, as she said, she was sure she would be torn to pieces if she left anybody behind ! Have we improved on the social condition described by Pascal ? “ If people knew exactly what was said about them there would not be four friends in the world ” ! Locker-Lampson, in one of his nonsense-verses, has hit off with sufficient accuracy the modern scheme of society :

They eat and drink, and scheme and plod,  
And go to church on Sunday,  
And many are afraid of God,  
And more of Mrs. Grundy.

Fairly accurate we say, with the reservation that now they do not “ go to church on Sunday.” No wonder that the best minds keep more and more away from this chatter-world. They can employ themselves so much better. One feels with Seneca : “ Never do I return home in the same moral condition as when I went out. And with Nietzsche : “ Among many people I live like the many and do not think like myself. It always seems to me that they wish to banish me from myself and rob me of my soul.”

The remedy for all this is hardly to banish ourselves from society ; is it not rather to lay in some stock of principles for our conduct in it ? And one of these is an edict of banishment against scandal, so far as our personal talk is concerned. And that will not be a

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negative principle. 'It is easy to see why people fall so readily into backbiting. It is because they have nothing else to say. It is on the same principle that bargees fill their sentences with lurid expletives. The habit is not really a vicious one. It is a consequence of their lack of adjectives. They have not the resources of Dean Swift, who confounded a cursing Irish fish-wife by calling her an isosceles triangle and other epithets culled from Euclid. Scandal is simply the conversational resource of empty minds—and the remedy is to fill our mind with other themes and interests. And here it should be our business not simply to carry our best into the common exchange, but to help others to bring out their best. The wise conversationalist will have in his mind a signal-box apparatus, full of levers for keeping trains on their proper lines. Such an art is perhaps more needed in the domestic circle than in the discursive talk of the salon. How many a quarrel-spoiled home would regain its peace if one of its members kept an eye on the signal-box ! It takes two to make a quarrel. If a given line will lead to a collision, why not turn the points ? It is easy enough. The quick, impetuous natures, whose explosion point is so soon reached, have nearly always a fund of generosity in them. Touch that, and their weapon falls. In our intimate fellowships, to be put in charge of a difficult nature, to help it by our patience and love to a truer command of itself, to a readier access to its own best—is not this the most sacred of trusts—the one where we may win the noblest, most godlike of victories ?

The world's true social intercourse is yet to seek.

## Talk

It is an affair of so many more things than speech. To reach it we shall need a new social system : a system in which every man will realise his relation to his fellow, and find his joy in contributing to that fellow's welfare. That means a vast breaking down of barriers, a vast opening up of new sympathies. Our present condition is one of irreligious barbarism. If Christ came again among us, do we think He would travel in a first-class carriage, or in the saloon of the *Mauretania* ? You would find Him in the third-class, and in the steerage of the liner. He would go there to seek the true humanness of humanity. If He came to London, think you He would be satisfied with a West-end, where souls are crushed out by enormous luxuries, and an East-end where in numberless homes people eat and drink, sleep, get ill and die in one room ? While these things exist, let us not call ourselves Christian, or even civilised. Plainly we are only at the beginning of our task as human beings. We shall never be right with God, or with His universe, till we have set about in earnest to be right with our neighbour.

### III

## TIME

TIME is the most familiar thing we know, and also the most elusive. We live, move, and have our being in it; and yet try to analyse it, to conceive it as an entity, and you are lost in the contradictory and the impossible. We regulate everything by it, our work, our pleasure, our sleep, our wakening, our down-sitting and our up-rising. We have the most elaborate machinery for recording it; there are men paid wages as timekeepers. Yet not our clock and watch makers nor the wage-earning timekeepers can tell us what it is. You can never put your finger on it. You never see the present moment, for even as you turn your attention to it it is gone. Analyse a second: it has a past, a present, and a future; and that present in its turn has a past and a future. It is infinitely divisible, the eternal becoming, the never actual. All our thought about it leads us into baffling contradictions. Try to imagine the world as having had a beginning in time. But that beginning, has it not a past behind it? Try, on the other hand, to imagine a world without a beginning; you are equally lost, you are left to choose between two impossibles. Thus, in this life of ours, do the simplest things shade off into ineffable mysteries; we scratch the surface and beneath us yawns the abyss.



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The most vivid thing in our existence is the sense of the transitory. From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age and death, it is a never-ceasing movement. Our pleasures and our pains, our triumphs and defeats, have this one thing in common—they never last. The monarch on his throne and the peasant at his plough are alike in a procession, and they move at the same pace. And all the accumulated energy of the universe is powerless to stop that movement.

*Minui rem quamque videmus*

*Et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus aevo,*

sings Lucretius, in his lofty, melancholy strain: "We see all things minish, and to pass away in the long process of time."

And yet, when we are most penetrated by the feeling of the transitory, and of the way in which our whole existence seems governed by it, there rises to the mind another side of the matter, not so vivid in its presentation, one which masses of people do not see till it is pointed out to them, but which, nevertheless, is absolutely real. It is the sense of something within us, answering to a something outside us, that is above time, freed from its conditions, and which we may call the timeless. It is indeed, when we come to think of it, the presence of this element in us that enables us to recognise the passing and the transitory. For you cannot observe movement properly except by standing still. Why is it that we are not conscious of our earth's flight round the sun? It is because we are all moving on and with the earth. To be aware of its rush, as a matter of our senses, we should

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have to stand outside it. When you have admitted that, you have struck on a feature of the soul's life which is vital to our theme. For when man is conscious of existence as a procession, as a ceaseless movement, it is by virtue of something in him that is not of the procession, which is standing outside it. Were it otherwise, then by the same law which makes him insensible of the planet's rush, he would be unconscious of life's rush. He would not be a spectator, by the simple fact that he would be wholly a partaker and sharer of it. He is aware of time's flow by virtue of an element in him that is beyond it. He knows time through that in him which is timeless.

As soon as we have struck this line of things we become conscious that it is no thin streak of illusion, but a broad, solid highway leading to the heart of reality. It has tributaries at every point. We find a number of roads which enter into the timeless. Take for instance the truths of mathematics. Euclid was a man amongst his fellows, subject to all the time conditions. He was born in a given age, grew, ate his dinners, dressed, made love, grew old and died, like the rest of us. You can calculate the number of years since he died. But now open his geometry. Read his demonstration that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the two sides. What is there of the time-element there? It is as true now as it was then; and it will be just as true millions of years hence, even if there were a crash of all the worlds in the interval. Turn to the great literatures, and you will find another road, not perhaps so plainly marked,

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but easily traceable. You witness a play of Shakespeare's, say, *As You Like it*. It is cast in time conditions. The dress of the personages, their locutions, the treatment of the banished duke and his daughter by the usurping brother, belong to an age gone by. But when they begin to speak; when Jaques philosophises, when the duke finds "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything"; when Adam, the good old servitor, exhibits his simple fidelity and sense of life's real values, when Rosalind shows us the emotions of a pure soul, kindled by love's flame, we have escaped from time. We are in a region of truths, of life-essences, that do not grow old; that are as true for us as for Shakespeare; that no processes of matter can warp or destroy.

What we are here trying to express is what the deep-seeing minds of all ages have recognised and set forth in their own way. Plato's doctrine that the world, as we see it, has behind it a system of eternal ideas of which the visible is the symbol and the shadow, was his mode of affirming the permanent in the midst of the transient. In China, more than two thousand years ago, we have Lao-Tse setting forth the eternal existence that exhibits itself amid the fluctuations of the world: "The whole of created nature, all its doing and its working, is but an emanation of Tao, Tao making itself visible. This Spirit is the highest and most perfect being. From eternity to eternity its glory will never cease, for it is the union of the true, the good, and the beautiful in the highest degree of perfection." These voices from

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the past have reached fuller expression in the philosophy of to-day. The sense of the timeless in our consciousness, and its relation to a timeless without us, is the note of Bergson and of Eucken. It has never found finer utterance than in the Prolegomena to Ethics of our T. H. Green, one of the highest and purest spirits of our time. Through a long, closely woven argument he works to the position that our self-consciousness is identified with a universal or divine consciousness. It is in fact the eternal consciousness, making the animal organism its vehicle, and subject to certain limitations in doing so, but retaining its essential character as independent of time, as the determinant of becoming, which does not itself become.

It is in the perception and proper appreciation of the timeless, as standing within the time conditions, and yet as distinct from them, that we shall find the way out of some of the most perplexing religious problems of the hour. Just now New Testament criticism of the destructive sort is fastening itself with feverish eagerness upon the time question that arises there. We are told that Christ's message was purely a time affair ; that He preached a revolutionary doctrine, the doctrine of a general upturning, a new state of things that was immediately to appear ; that His ethic was simply an interim-ethic, meant just to fill up the swiftly lessening gap between the old order and the new. We shall be greatly surprised if, when the dust of the present controversy has cleared away, it will not be seen that the fuss is over an entirely minor question. Doubtless the mind of the primitive

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Church was largely occupied with the idea of an early Second Coming. St. Paul himself was, at one time, full of it. Need we be surprised at that? Divine ideas come to us always in a temporal clothing. But to confine the Gospel to this idea is to try to put the universe into a quart pot. The Church thought about time in the manner of its time. But it was founded on the timeless. Does it make any difference to us what Paul thought about the Parousia when we read his chapter on love; or when he tells us that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Is that a mere interim-ethic which teaches that the Kingdom of God is within us; that it is better to give than to receive; that we are to forgive until seventy times seven; that the pure in heart shall see God? All this, does it not fit the twentieth century as well as the first? It will equally fit the two hundredth century, and that because it stands outside the movement of the ages, rooted in an eternal now.

New Testament criticism, besides this particular preoccupation, is full of questions as to the authenticity, genuineness and date of certain books. Who wrote Matthew? What is the date of Luke? Who is the author of the fourth Gospel? These questions are important, because they involve that of the distance of time between the writers and the events they chronicle. Time here is an affair of moment, for it carries with it the issue as to the possible growth of legend, and whether the writers are describing at first hand, or are using traditions which may have changed greatly in their passage from hand to hand.

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How much these points were appreciated even in the early Church is shown in that remarkable passage of Origen, greatest and saintliest of the Greek Fathers, when speaking of the Gospels he says: "The evangelists have not actually understood many of the extraordinary deeds of Jesus, and have given purely spiritual things in the form of stories. They preferred the external to the spiritual truth, so that not seldom they preserved the spiritual truth in a measure in the garb of untruth." Whatever we may think of this statement as criticism, it is an invaluable hint as to interpretation. For when we speak of genuineness, authenticity, and the rest, what is the real question at issue? Is it not always the difference in the Gospels between the temporal and the timeless? If the thing that meets us there is a spiritual truth carrying its own evidence, in the response it meets with in the soul; if we find there something that by its own heavenly quality lifts us from our lower selves towards the heights, what matters it when it was written, or by whom? What matters the particular form in which it comes, provided we see the spiritual fact shining through it? Bible reading will become for us all a quite new exercise when we have learned to trace the great dividing line; when we have learned by the soul's own natural instinct to take the temporal raiment of the divine story at its temporal value, and to hold to and profit by what is timeless and eternal.

The saints of all ages have in effect been doing this, often with a naïve unconsciousness. They might hold, in theory, the most orthodox view of plenary inspira-

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tion. They got over its difficulties by a glorious boldness of interpretation. Take for instance the Middle Age account of the Ascension, a story which in its literal form runs up so flatly against our modern astronomical science. The mediævalists found no trouble here. They take it as offering a deep spiritual truth. Thus Hugo de Saint Victor says that by the highest we are to understand the innermost, and that to "ascend to God" means to withdraw into the depths of ourselves, and there find something higher than ourselves. That may not be the whole truth of the matter, but it is a very good one to go on with.

This view of the timeless in the midst of temporal conditions concerns much more than the question of Biblical interpretation. It covers the whole of life.

[It is only when the timeless has entered into them that our human relations reach their true character, and attain their proper dignity. When we love our wife, our child, our friend, what is it that we love?]

"There are many wonderful mixtures in the world," says George Eliot, "which are all alike called love."

It is a word which, in some minds, stands only for fleshly passions, for sordid intrigues. In the modern drama, and in much continental literature, the "lover" stands, more often than not, for the successful libertine. Lady Mary Montagu, speaking of Vienna society in the eighteenth century, says: "It would be a downright affront, and publicly resented, if you invited a woman of quality to dinner without at the same time inviting her two attendants—lover and husband—between whom she always sits in state with great gravity." Between parents and children,



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between friend and friend, the relation is different from and higher than this, but how high does it reach? [You can love a man, a woman, a child, without entering that centre of things where love alone reaches its true meaning. It is only when we have touched the timeless in those we love that we enter on the true glory of loving. It is only then that love becomes the ingredient and furtherer of the highest in us. It is this which gives love its permanency, when all else has fallen away ; when youth has passed, when beauty has faded, when trials and difficulties come. When love inhabits this sphere it takes on a divine patience, a forgiveness to the uttermost, a hopefulness that no disappointments can quench. Here the eternity in us touches the eternity in our friend, and makes our love immortal.]

It is by dwelling in life's timeless element that we find our rest and refuge from the worries and vexations of the world's affairs. For we are here at the centre. Let the wheel revolve with all the enormous rush of its circumference. At this innermost point there is no rush. At this centre we enter into the timeless, into God. That is the secret of the ages, the secret of the larger life. Let that noble old writer, John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist, put it for us : " A good man, one that is informed by true religion, lives above himself. He moves in a larger sphere than his own being, and cannot be content to enjoy himself except he may enjoy God too, and himself in God."

## IV

### MONEY

WHAT money means in modern life gets its most vivid illustration in the breaking of a bank. To those immediately interested it is the nearest approach they have ever made to "the end of all things." Dante wrote over the door of his *Inferno*, "All hope abandon ye who enter here." In that region hopelessness was represented by an open door. In a bank failure it is a closed one. That piece of stolid oak standing there, bolted and barred, is to the crowd outside as the sign of doom. What is a man to do in a world where his cheque has suddenly become waste-paper ; where the loose cash in his pocket, and his household belongings, seem all that is left to him ? And the catastrophe is more than local. It sends a cold shiver through the whole community. Under the shock the business world vibrates to its farthest edge. And not the business world only. The artist before his picture, the divine in his study, the scientist in his laboratory, forget for the time the questions of their calling, absorbed in this common interest which makes the whole world kin. Here is something that touches us all. However far our head may be in the clouds there is the same trouble for us if the

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foundation gives way beneath us. And money in modern civilisation is one of the foundations. The most ardent religionist, the most transcendental philosopher will feel all the difference if he wakes up to-morrow and finds nothing in his pocket. When a man is found in his chamber with a bullet through his brain one of the first questions at the inquest will be, "Was he financially embarrassed?" We have known personally men of the highest and sincerest religious profession who have gone down under this strain. Under a heavy, crushing loss their faith went—their sense of the value of life—and they made an end.

This is part of the price we pay for the enormous social complication of the time. For in the long history of the race money is a modern invention. In primitive times men fed, clothed and housed themselves without it. The tribe, with its hunting, fishing, or cattle rearing, was self-contained. When exchanges took place they had the form of simple barter. Well, for good or ill, we are no longer primitive. The tribe now has become the whole human family, and money is the link which holds it together. It is really an astonishing spectacle, where the good and the evil are mixed up in the strangest way. The modern credit and exchange system exhibits, for one thing, a greater faith than can be found in all the religions. Your orthodox Englishman, according to the terms of his Church creed, should have the worst opinion of the heathen races outside. Are not these peoples sunk in idolatry, destitute of the true principles of religion and morality? Yet he trusts these people

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with his most precious possessions. In exchange for their bonds he scatters his millions amongst the Confucianist Chinese, the Buddhists of Japan, the Mohammedans of India and of Turkey. And his trust is not misplaced. He feels himself prosperous in his well-furnished home ; but what he is worth is, for the most part, represented by a few scraps of paper, covered often with, to him, unintelligible signs, which somebody else is keeping for him, and which he never looks at.

No sensible man will decry money, for none of us can get on without it. In a social condition in which we each do the one thing we have learned and are best at, as our contribution to the community ; and where the hundred and one other things necessary to life are done for us by our neighbours, we are necessarily partners in an enormous exchange system, in which money, as the common denominator of values, is the indispensable medium. In that selectest company on earth, the band of Christ's disciples, there was a money-bag, though the holder of it, as so often happens, was the wrong man. Sydney Smith expressed the common feeling when he said that he felt happier for every guinea he received. Charles Lamb was the reverse of a miser, but do we not honestly sympathise with him in that outburst of his : " O money, money, . . . thou art health and liberty and strength ; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the devil ! " What a power ; that can create railways, and develop continents, and drive ships across the ocean ; that can make war and prevent it ! " When kings are thinking of war," says Sidonia, the great financier

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in Disraeli's "Coningsby," "they come to us for loans." Columbus was reflecting the sentiment of his time when in one of his letters he says: "Gold is a wonderful thing; whoever possesses it is lord of all he wants. By means of gold one can even get souls into Paradise." It can certainly perform wonderful feats with souls, even if it does not get them into Paradise. To-day it buys brains and hearts and uses them for its purposes. It controls vast areas of public opinion through the Press, in ways which would astonish the unenlightened. It is humiliating to think how literature, how genius has, in every age, danced attendance on its possessors. Lucian has given an unsurpassable description of what went on in this way in the second century, and Rousseau in the eighteenth. One is reminded of the ancient story of a king who asked a philosopher "Why it was that philosophers were found so constantly at the door of kings, while the kings did not seek the philosophers"; and of the philosopher's reply, as worldly, we fear, as it was witty: "It is because philosophers know what is good for them, and kings do not."

83 [In considering what should be our attitude towards money we have to begin, then, by recognising its importance. There is no blinking that fact. The world is run on a money basis; it is so for the saint as well as the millionaire. It covers an enormous part of life. Man was meant to be a possessor, to add to his personality, as it were, the treasures which he finds in his world. Money touches character at every point. Said Mr. Gladstone once: "When you know what a man does with money, how he gets it, keeps it,

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spends it, and thinks about it, you know some of the most important things about him." So it becomes for us all a supreme feature of ethics. The whole business of inner development, of the spiritual life, for ourselves as individuals and for the race as a whole, depends very vitally on our relation to it; depends on our answer to the question whether it is to be to us a master or a servant; whether it is to control us or to be controlled by us. ┘

In answering the question we need to take note of some considerations; and these not of mere sentiment, or of pious traditions, but of hard fact. ┘ We have seen what money can do. Every moment we feel its power. But the things it cannot do! You can get out of it all life's bottom things, but you can get none of life's top things. It can feed all the flesh appetites. It will supply you with luxury, with ease. It can buy bows, and reverences, and salutations in the market-place. It is a purveyor to all the devilries—to avarice, to covetousness, to selfishness, to envy, to hatred, to lust, to murder. Not, certainly, that it always produces these things. But it can produce them; it is the soil where they grow; where they have grown in every age and every country of the world. But from all the gold bags in the Bank of England you could not distil one drop of mother love. You can extract from them nothing of the world's highest thought or best feeling. You cannot write a spiritual book on money: no, nor a spiritual chapter. We are trying here, but are failing egregiously. The real soul of humanity gets no rise from this source. Under its power the heart chills; it never expands. Ask

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whence has come the great literature, the noble music, the fine heroisms? They do not hail from Mammon. Gold is a separator, never a uniter. ] Put the King of England, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and a couple of English sailors on some hazardous voyage, where they must steer a frail bark across unknown seas; or maroon them on a desert island, where for months they have to look after themselves. They would develop a hearty comradeship, full of mutual service, of recognition of each other's human value. Put them back in their old place, standing in their possessions and no possessions, and all these things, which are life's best things, are dried up and withered.

We spoke a moment ago of literature and music. To see the relation of mere money to these things let us take a modern instance. Look at Germany of to-day as compared with the Germany of yesterday. A couple of generations ago Germany was poor. It was said in Napoleon's time that while France had the empire of the earth, and Britain the empire of the seas, Germany, with its poets and philosophers, had the empire of the air. But with its poverty in gold how rich was it in the things of the mind! Those were the days of its Kant, its Lessing, its Hegel, its Schelling, its Goethe. It was then it produced its glorious music—when Bach and Beethoven and Mozart and Handel wrought the poetry of sound, made it the interpreter of the soul's deepest and highest. To-day Germany is rich, and has given its mind to the development of riches. It is a country of mills and factories, of glowing furnaces, of huge financial operations. But where is its poetry, its philosophy, its



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music, its religion? In these things, which are the real treasures, which make humanity a great and holy thing, what a silence, what a barrenness has fallen on the Rhineland! And there will be no recovery until Germany, with the other countries of the world, has refound its soul, and learned afresh that man cannot live by bread alone but by every word of God; by God's speech, waited for and interpreted!

There is a book waiting to be written by somebody on Money and Religion. They have had a curious history; one of the strangest relations; of alliances and antagonisms, of attractions and repulsions. Money never did, and never could, create religion. Your capitalist may endow religious institutions. To see the way he is run after by religious societies, to observe the part which finance plays in the church organisations, one might easily imagine that here also the gold bag is omnipotent. But come to realities and we find where we are. You cannot, by any alchemy, extract prayer from a dollar bill or a bank-note. All the gold in the world could never produce a genuine religious aspiration. The noblest emotions were never born in that atmosphere, and where it prevails they do not thrive. It was not money that started Christianity, or gave us the New Testament. They are not Stock Exchange values. It is only when the great ecstasies are over, when the lofty ideals have ceased their heavenward flight, that money has come in as a determining factor in the Church's life. The betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver was more than an isolated event. It stands as a symbol of the part money has played in religion's story; a symbol,

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mark you, not simply of religion's weakness, but of its enduring strength. The man fell, but the Christ triumphed :

Still, as of old,  
Man by himself is priced.  
For thirty pieces Judas sold  
Himself, not Christ.

Where money is master, religion is always at its lowest ebb. When the Church could say "Silver and gold have I none," it made men stand up and walk. Later, its treasury overflowed, but it had lost its power of healing. What a spectacle have we of the Christianity of the Renaissance, when, at the selection of a Pope, an aspirant to the Vatican throne sent mules laden with gold to the palaces of the cardinal electors ; when it is recorded of Pope Alexander VI. that he used to seize on rich prelates and other magnates, poison or strangle them, and then appropriate their estates ! His method was to promote them to one lucrative post after another, and then, when they were sufficiently rich, destroy them. "Our lord," wrote the Venetian Ambassador, "generally fattens them up before feasting on them."

The great religious founders have always kept money in its place. St. Bernard ruled the mind of Europe from his hut at Clairvaux ; Luther and Calvin, Wiclif and Knox, were unknown to high finance. John Wesley left nothing but his books and some silver spoons. These men conformed to that saying of Gratry : "Take poverty for your weapon. There is nothing to be done with men who have not conquered gold and silver." The same is true of all the men who

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have done the high things. Whoever thinks of Galileo or Copernicus or Newton from the money standpoint? We never inquire about their pounds and shillings. Yet they were worth something to the world! Wordsworth on his hills, Burns at his plough, showered gifts on their fellows, but they were not in specie nor realisable that way. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost" and received five pounds for the manuscript. You can see to-day the little cottage at Chalfont St. Giles which he found good enough for him. He whose thought ranged through infinity and eternity had not room in his mind for the material on which Wall-street fattens. These voices from the past are almost lost in the roar of our present-day money-making. But they will survive and be heard when our money-makers, so big in their own estimation, have gone silent and forgotten.

At present there is no proper ethic of money; but there is one coming. Our present condition is a phase which is assuredly not permanent. Man has been taken by surprise by the sudden enormous accession of his material wealth, a surprise which, for the time, has confounded both his mind and his heart. But humanity has a way of recovering from its surprises and of putting things in their places. It will do so here. The new ethic will accept wealth at its true value, neither more nor less. It will give man leave to develop to their utmost all the treasures that his world holds. That plainly is part of his inheritance. But it will have new principles of acquirement and distribution. It will use the treasure not in the interests of badness but of goodness; not for the

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growing of selfishness, of pride, of debasing pleasures, of caste distinctions, but for the heightening of human life. It will direct its flow to the relief of those who starve for the want of what it can procure ; to the feeding of ill-nourished bodies ; to securing leisure to the over-worked ; to the winning for every child of Adam the means of a full and joyous life. And it will teach, with an authority born of age-long experience, and which none will gainsay, that man's true kingdom is one not of possession, but of being ; not of meat and drink, but of God's righteousness and peace and joy.

## V

### ENJOYING

To begin with, ought we to enjoy ourselves? The question is worth asking, because there is a good deal of religion and of theology that suggests or implies the contrary. The praise of melancholy, as our only proper attitude, has also appeared, especially in these later days, in some of our philosophy and literature. According to Schopenhauer and Hartmann, ours is a very miserable world, and we ought to be properly miserable in it. At best, says Voltaire, we ought to take existence as a "*mauvaise plaisanterie*." We remember his satire on optimism. Says Martin in "Candide": "But I confess that in casting a glance over this globe, or rather this globule, I think that God has abandoned it to some maleficent being." Newman, from a very different standpoint, comes to an almost precisely similar conclusion. He says, in the "Grammar of Assent": "I see only a choice of alternatives in explanation of so critical a fact—either there is no Creator, or He has disowned His creatures." So much of our religion has been in that key. Earth is a wilderness, mitigated by the prospect of something better beyond. We are to attune ourselves to this note. With numbers of pious persons laughter is at a discount. How dare a man joke while the Judge is at the door? High spirits are a peril to the

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soul. M'Cheyne of Dundee confessed that the ministerial function which he liked least was to celebrate a wedding. The idea to-day is very widely spread, both amongst the religious and the non-religious, that the music to which the Church moves is a funeral march. The idea of taking this world as a really good place; of accepting the present moment, the fact of existence, as a thing to be happy in, is held by philosophy to be an illusion, by many Christians as a sort of impiety.

Whatever the case for philosophy, this attitude in religion is, to say the least, a singular one. It is so self-contradictory. To begin with, it is dead against its doctrine of God. For the theology of every school defines Deity as, amongst other things, possessed of an infinite happiness. One wonders how what is considered a good thing in God should be a bad thing in His creatures. And the idea as applied to His creatures is so queerly immoral. It places morality as an affair of present *versus* future. For the people who piously make themselves miserable on earth, do so in the expectation of being joyous in heaven. Nobody expects to practise asceticism there. Nobody thinks of gloom and long faces in the celestial spheres. Everything there, if we take the accepted notion, is arrayed on a basis of the utmost wealth of living. Morality there is a morality of enjoying. But is morality then an affair of place, or of one time as against another? If enjoyment is good in heaven, it should be good on earth. Put it in yet another way. All the churches, all the theologies agree that it is a Christian duty to labour for the welfare, the happiness,

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of others. But if happiness is good for these others—else why are we to labour for it?—then it must be good for ourselves. If it be not, then are we not doing our neighbour a wrong in trying to secure him so dangerous a commodity?

It is astonishing that one should have to argue in this way. What is more astonishing is that so many people need the argument. The world is still full of self-torturers. Scourges are still on sale. People go into convents, into monasteries, shave their heads, wear ugly dresses, shut their eyes to the world's splendours, in the belief that the celestial powers are pleased with all this. And multitudes of earnest Protestants, who exclaim against monkery, build themselves an interior cell, gloomy as any anchorite's, where their soul lives, a tormented and sunless life. They cannot get rid of the belief that sanctity has some sacred affinity with sourness; that to reach heaven they must journey with flints in their shoes.

It is almost hopeless to argue with this attitude, and that because it is a result not so much of reasoning as of temperament. The temperament has been derived by long inheritance from those darker ages when man, yet feebly furnished for life's battle, constantly defeated in his fight with nature, conceived the world as dominated by malignant forces. The unseen powers were hostile to him. That mood passed into Christianity, and has been there the source of much bad theology. The vapours of it overspread the blue sky of the Galilean gospel, the sky under which Jesus walked. That gracious figure, standing in the sunshine, overflowing with the love



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of God and man, finding sermons in the flowers and in the happy laughter of children; in the face of betrayal and death proclaiming His victory over the world, receded from the view, to be replaced by cruel dogmas, full of gloom and doom. We need to-day to win our way back to His sunshine.

If we are not enjoying life, it is assuredly not for want of invitations. They are so numerous, so varied, so hospitably pressing, that it argues a mere churlishness if we do not accept them. The world has its pains and penalties, its shadows, its inescapable sorrows, but is that the whole story, or the really significant part of it? As Sir Oliver Lodge well says, if it were so, "we should have a bigger problem than that of evil; it would be the problem of good." Why, if we are under chance, or malevolence, have we such a vast apparatus of well-being, of happiness? To be started with the endowment of our five senses is enrichment beyond the dreams of millionaires. You can reckon it out in figures: Would anyone part with his eyesight for any sum that can be named? But we got it for nothing. Every one of these senses is an avenue of pleasure. Along these roads the treasures of the universe travel to offer themselves. The eye gives us the green fields, the mountains, the splendours of the stars, the faces of our friends. Another nerve carries the world's music; along another steals the exquisite soul of the flowers, in scent and perfume. A million pleasant things offer themselves to our taste and our touch. The normal output of the senses is a pleasure output. Evidently they were constructed for that.

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This is the ground floor. The same rule holds when we mount higher, to the mind's upper story. Consider what memory offers us, the power by which we store the past and can live our lives a thousand times over ! At what price shall we value imagination, the faculty by which we can reconstruct the world on any pattern we please ; indulge the delicious vagaries of unfettered fancy ? In this realm you can have all the world's gaiety without any of its responsibility. You can make yourself a millionaire, and enjoy yourself in the *rôle* much more than does the actual one ; for you carry out your schemes without hindrance, and live, as he cannot, in a palace which has no cares in it. Think of your creative faculty ; your ability to make things, to produce finished work out of raw material. In whatsoever humblest sphere this talent is exercised, how noble are its enjoyments ! Here is " something attempted, something done " ; here stand you in line with your own Creator, helping Him to the finishing of His universe, offering your part towards the eternal progress.

Beyond all this ; to which, in a developed soul, all else is a mere adjunct, is the power of faith, the power by which we apprehend the invisible, by which we penetrate the secret and purpose of life ; that " secret of Jesus " wherein, with Him, we know God as our Father and love all men as our brothers. In this sphere we find a sun which no clouds can hide, which shines by night and by day, which fills our homes with light, which throws upon the face of nature a mystic glory ; which makes the beauty of a flower, the face of a little child, the

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revelation of a grace unspeakable. And the sense of this grace is growing in the world. Of all the later gifts with which humanity is being enriched, the greatest is that love of the brethren, that feeling of universal solidarity which is almost a new sense in the modern man. In multitudes of souls everywhere the great happiness is in the thought of the spreading of happiness amongst their brethren ; their greatest sorrow the thought of the miseries that wait to be removed. To see the city slums cleared, the reign of drink coming to its end, the children rescued from the gutter and put in the way of wholesome living ; to think of the joy of the aged workers in the provision made for their last years ; all this in countless souls of our day has produced a sensation more exquisite in its flavour than any conceivable pleasure of sense.

Alongside of and belonging to all this, consider that other form of Nature's care, in our enormous adaptability. The inner machinery is equal to all changes, to all varieties of circumstance. Men learn to love their earth-mother in all her moods. The Iclander clings to his snowy wastes, his barren rocks. We in England grumble at our weather. In saner moods we realise that our weather has been the making of us, the agent of some of our deepest joys. Have we reflected how the grim conditions of our northern climates have produced in us and our neighbours that inwardness which has been the source of our great imaginative creations, of our deepest things of the mind ? Our Australian brethren revel in their sunshine ; but they pay for that. They live, and live gloriously, but they have not yet voiced their life.

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The population of Australia is about that of England in Elizabeth's time. Out of that population England produced her Bacon, her Shakespeare, her Spenser, her Raleigh—a whole galaxy of great spirits. In science, in art, in literature, in philosophy, in theology, Australia yet waits for her great man. It is a curious study. There are, of course, other and vastly important factors in the production of these results. But when all is said, there will remain the fact that our climatic rigours, our clouds and storms, have helped in no inconsiderable degree in those great mental creations which have added so enormously to the happiness of the world.

Here, then, are some of the invitations offered to us for the enjoyment of life. Note that they are not of our own willing. They were there, waiting for us, on our advent. The feast is spread for us. There rings through life's banqueting-hall the welcome: "Come and partake!" Is the invitation a mockery, the snare spread by some malevolent being? Is it faith that makes such a suggestion? If there is malevolence anywhere in the universe, it must surely be in the obsession of human spirits by the idea that all this is a delusion, a trap for the destruction of men.

But here a question arises. What, if things are so, are we to say of those great spirits whose note has been that of renunciation, as the way of human perfection? A while ago we were mourning the death of Tolstoy, the noblest soul the world has seen in our time. We think of Tolstoy as following in the line of St. Francis, of St. Louis, of St. Paul, of the men who have given up all that ministers to the world's ambitions, to its

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thirst of pleasure. But it is only a surface view which sees here a contradiction. Look deeper into these lives, and you find rather a confirmation of all that has been advanced. The saints, and the Master they followed, never renounced the good of the world; no, nor the joy of living. Jesus was the happiest being in the world of the first century, and Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth. They accepted the joy of the senses, only in a simpler and a larger way. They had nothing that they might possess all. Was there a soul elsewhere who felt as deeply as they the glory of the sunrise, the song of birds, the fellowship with all creatures, the thrill of human society, the happiness of loving, the joy of uttermost giving? They showed men the lesson our stilted, laboured civilisation is to-day most in need of—that not the rich and the luxurious only, but all men, those most naked of everything that wealth commands, have a glorious world to live in, if only they will use it well. Their independence of the sense-life, what did that teach? Not that the sense-life is evil, but that its pleasures are the toys and sweets with which God regales the child-life; delights that, as the soul grows, may be put aside for the deeper things in view. And the cross which Jesus mounted, in whose way these men followed, was it not what Maurice Hewlett's Senhouse says of it? "Why do women mourn Christ on His cross! Where else would he choose to be? A royal giver! To have the thing to give—and to give it all!"

We are missing the lesson of life, the plain duty it enjoins upon us, if we do not enjoy it. We talk

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of service to our fellow, but there is no better service we can render than to show him a smiling face. That is our personal advertisement of the fact that God's world is a good one, and that he may take heart in believing it. Enjoyment is to be cultivated as a virtue ; to be cultivated because it is largely an art. It is from our stupidity that we so often miss it. As Sydney Smith says : " Many, in this world, run after felicity like an absent man hunting for his hat, while all the time it is on his head or in his hand." They run after the thing that is out of reach, and curse the distance between them and it ; and all the while they have ten thousand better things within their grasp. " God's in His heaven," sings the poet ; yes, and in His earth, too, and that is why it is good to be alive.

## VI

### THE MIXED

A STRANGER to our world, coming to study it, first as it presents itself to him, and second as he finds it represented in our books, might easily come to the conclusion that our scientists, philosophers, and theologians, who write these books, are a set of madmen. They would seem to him occupied in tearing the universe to pieces and exhibiting it as something quite different from what it is. The scientist, he finds, talks of elements, molecules, and atoms. He cannot find any of them. He sees trees, mountains, rivers, seas, animals, men. He finds the philosopher, in discussing the mind, resolving it into its elements ; never a conclusion without these three things, the intellect, the emotions, the will. But he meets none of these things in themselves. In every human action they are presented as mixed ; never a thought without emotion and will in it ; never an emotion without thought and will ; never an action without these three co-operating. Man, again, is spoken of as body and soul. But body without soul is a corpse ; soul without body is a ghost. There is no man here ; he exists only in the combination. The theologians, he



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discovers, are busy with the same trick. They take man's happiness and his misery and divide them off into a future heaven of undiluted happiness and a hell of undiluted misery. All man really knows is a combination of pleasure and pain in a more or less tolerable mixture in himself. Omar Khayyam has put the fact in his famous quatrain :—

I sent my soul through the invisible  
Some letters of the after life to spell,  
And after many days my soul returned,  
And said ' Behold ! myself am heaven and hell.'

This same rage for differentiation, for pulling things to pieces, our stranger discovers all through the Christian scheme, as our theologies present it. They lay hands on the Founder and pull Him to pieces. They make a great dividing line between the humanity and the divinity ; attributing so much to the one and so much to the other. But Jesus, as we know Him, did not come like that. He came not as two but as one. All there was of Him, so far as authentic knowledge goes, was of a piece, the one gracious figure that moves through the story, living, speaking, teaching, suffering—life in its most wonderful mixture, but one life.

That, we say, might easily be our visitor's first impression. Later on he might see reason to modify it. He would find that, after all, there was some reason in our separations, our definitions, our analyses ; that in many directions, at least, they led on to important truths. The world has something behind it, as well as that which strikes immediately on our senses. The crucible has its uses ; not only the

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physical but the mental one. The combination yields its secrets only when divided into its components. The world is a bigger thing than appears ; and in exercising upon it his science, his logic, and even his imagination, man has not gone beyond his rights.

Yet the question arises whether that first impression, which we have just sketched, has been properly considered by us. Why is it that things are offered to us, first and foremost, in this mixed way ? Is there not a reality in the combination, as well as in its separate parts ; and may not this reality be the greatest of all ? As we push our definitions and refinements may we not often be going further away from that reality ? Why things are mixed in the way they are is what philosophy and theology may wrangle about to the end of time without getting us much further. That they are there, just as they are, is the supreme fact. The absolute, the perfect, are the things we perpetually look for but never find, either within or without. Outside, the wind which alternately braces and chills, the sunshine that delights and exhausts ; every single circumstance with its for and against ; within us, bitter and sweet, joys with sorrows at their heart ; sainthood and animalhood ; at one moment the thrill of life's good, at another the sense of its burden. Ours is a world which laughs alike at the pessimist and the optimist. If life is all bad how came man with his vast vocabulary of the good ? How came he ever to laugh, or to sing, or to write poetry, or to have children ? The very make of him is a flat contradiction to that verdict. But let him, in his tilt against pessimism,

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not overdo the business. The man who takes a light view of evil shows himself a light person. It is an ancient and formidable adversary, against which we must take no chances.

The whole wisdom of life—a wisdom in which our age has yet to take some important lessons—consists in our proper apprehension of life as a mixture; a clear perception of the fact, and a right dealing with it. The vast experience which the world has already had should have taught us something here; and yet, as we will try in what follows to show, the point has too often been missed. In politics, in religion, in our personal attitude to life, we are constantly missing it. And what is the point? The ages have shown us nothing if not this: that in the mixture the good is the topmost, the victorious element; that the existing evil has a soul of good in it; that our wisdom is in believing in the good and working for it, while keeping the eye of eternal vigilance on that other sinister element in the compound. This sounds very simple. To some it may appear a ludicrously commonplace conclusion after all this preamble. A glance, however, at how affairs have gone, and are still going, in this world may show us what need we have of this commonplace.

Let us begin with man, and the way of dealing with him, as we find it in governments and politics. In the early part of the sixteenth century there appeared a book which has perhaps caused more controversy than any other except the Bible. It was Machiavelli's treatise "The Prince," a book whose importance lay not so much in itself as in the fact that it put into

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incomparable prose the views on which sovereigns and governing powers generally had acted for ages, and on which for long periods they continued to act. It became the *vade mecum* of popes and emperors; its precepts were the Bible of the ruling classes. Historians and publicists of our own day have defended it as showing—man being what he is—the only safe way of governing. And what is Machiavelli's fundamental principle? It is that man is bad, a scoundrel, as he more than once terms him. In that other book of his, "The Discourses," he says, "Man can do nothing good but by necessity." Princes are exhorted to break faith whenever it suits their interests to do so, on the ground that everybody else will do the same by you when they have the chance. "Therefore a prudent lord neither could nor should observe faith, when such observance might be to his injury. . . . Were all men good, this precept would not be good, but since men are bad and would not keep faith with you you are not bound to keep faith with them." His only criticism of cruelty is as to whether it is done cleverly or bunglingly. His ideal prince is Cæsar Borgia, one of whose State methods was to invite his opponents to a peaceful conference and then assassinate them.

We have seen this view of human nature and its accompanying policy at work for some centuries. The idea is that the beast in man is, and always will be, uppermost. It can only be controlled by force or fraud. Hence the only right is with the big battalions. The way of dealing with crime is by punishment and more punishment. We look on these views to-day

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with amazement ; yet it is only within the lifetime of many of us that the contrary principle has won its place. It is within our recollection that the maxim of "Trust the people" has become operative in public affairs ; that the belief of the good in man as stronger than his evil, as a thing to be trusted in and steadily worked upon, has taken the place of the old conviction. But we shall never go back upon that principle. It is, as an operative power, yet in its infancy, but what wonders it is working ! It is reforming our prison system ; it is revolutionising our criminal code ; it is within reach of the abolition of war ; it has in full view a confederacy of the nations, where one law will rule, and one sentiment prevail, that of the brotherhood of mankind. The inevitable logic of facts is proving to us that the human mixture is, on the whole, good, and, by the inevitable law of its own nature, is working towards a higher good.

This is human nature as a whole. Let us turn now to some of its separate aspects. Of things mixed, one of the strangest and most puzzling is that of human love, especially in its aspect of sexual love. Says George Eliot : "There are many wonderful mixtures in the world which are all alike called love." In discussing it more than one mediæval writer found here the inner meaning of the ancient fable of the centaur, of man organically united to the beast. There have not been wanting austere spirits who have denounced this mixture as a degradation of humanity, and who have urged an entire escape from the sexual relation as the only way of spiritual perfection. Says Augustine in the "Soliloquies" : "I have decided that

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nothing is so much to be shunned as sexual relations, for I feel that nothing so much casts down the mind of man from its citadel as do the blandishments of women." It is a curious reflection on this that had Augustine's father and mother been of this opinion, and acted on it, there would have been no Augustine ! Had there been no sexual relation there had been no ascetics in the world to condemn it ! Here, indeed, is one of the most baffling of combinations. In offering it nature seems almost satirical. The spiritual in us perpetually girds at the flesh. And yet it is through the flesh that comes the spiritual. Through it, and by no other means, come into being the souls that fill the churches, that give converts to the evangelist, and that, according to our theologies, provide heaven with inhabitants ! Does it not seem as if here our sophistications are an attempt to be wiser than nature ? We start our divisions where she is all for combination. The ascetic calls for annihilation of the passions. The libertine will have the passions and nought else. The Christian doctrine, as the Master taught it, unites the sexes in a bond where spirit and flesh take each their proper place ; the higher granting the claims of the lower, but always in subordination to its own. Benjamin Constant, who cannot be cited as an example of his own teaching, nevertheless saw true here. " How one appreciates a true marriage," says he, " where the pleasure is without disgust, where duty unites itself to all the joy, and where she who partakes your joy is at the same time the friend, the life companion, partaker of your thoughts and interests ! "

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Here then are two great departments, that of government and of domestic life, where nature comes to us with her mixture, asking how we will deal with it. There remains a third, which stands behind the two, and claims to control them both. It is that of religion, and again the rule obtains, the rule of things mixed. The Christian religion, to which we here confine ourselves, has for its text-book the Bible—the book on which we have been brought up; which contains the highest truth and the highest life we know; which, as Seeley says, towers over the greatest single work of human production as the Peak of Teneriffe towers over our tallest buildings. But its truth and life, how do they come to us? In such a mixture as no other book we read to-day presents. In it eternal truths lie so often wrapped in worn-out time vestures. It has shoals of statements which are flatly contradicted by modern science and modern history. Modern scholarship has a totally different view of the Jewish occupation of Canaan from that given in the Pentateuch. It is sure that much of Isaiah was not written by Isaiah, and that the Book of Daniel belongs, not to the time of Nebuchadnezzar, but to that of Antiochus Epiphanes, centuries after. And it has another idea of the miraculous from that held by the writers both of the Old and New Testaments. And yet the Christian Church is sending out this book by millions to every part of the world. It is translating it into every known language. It is putting it into the hands of the Chinese, of the Japanese, of the Hindus, of the African savage, as God's highest revelation to man. Thoughtful men are full of



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questions about this. When an educated Chinaman asks, as one of their number in a just published book has asked, whether Europe expects his countrymen to believe in the story of Jonah, he is entitled to a reply. We have ourselves no doubt as to what the reply should be. We have no business to offer the book to the non-Christian peoples as anything but what we ourselves have discovered it to be—a mixture. To send the book without that knowledge of it would be a gross fraud and a grievous wrong. Are we to permit these peoples, without word spoken or help given, to go through the agonising process by which our own standpoint of faith has been reached? Are we to allow them first to accept the book as on one absolute level of revelation, then to discover their mistake and to experience the pain and revolt of disillusion, then to travel all the weary way to a truer view; when, by a frank word at the outset, we could solve their difficulties and place them where we ourselves stand? Let us go on giving the world the Bible—it is the best gift we can offer it—but give it under no false pretences. “Here,” let us say to these outside races, “is a God’s gift to you, which comes as every other God-gift, as His rain and sunshine, His crops and seasons come, not as something absolute or ideally perfect, but as a mixture of things higher and lower, best and not best, but a mixture where the best is predominant, so predominant that, properly used, it will lift you higher than ever you were before.”

Our personal life is a mixture. No philosophy and no theology can solve the problem as to why it comes

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to us as it does. But we can live here by a faith which is founded on facts. That the mixture has so much good in it, and works so persistently towards a good that is beyond, is sufficient reason for us to believe that the ultimate nature of things is neither adverse nor indifferent towards us. The defeats, the failures, the pains, the sorrows, are life's unknown quantity. That they exist side by side with so much that we know as good is proof enough in courageous souls, for the faith that these also are part of a scheme whose final issue is not yet, but which will reveal itself in its time as wholly benevolent.

## VII

### DOCTRINE

WE shall never forget our first view of Mont Blanc from Sallanches, on the road to Chamonix from Geneva. It is now, alas ! in the long ago. Our mind was full of the picture of it in that delightful book of Michelet—"The Mountain." It was a cold, gloomy day, like the one on which he saw it, and the impression was exactly that which filled the mind of the French poet-naturalist : "the sad and snow-crowned dome," "the illustrious hermit whose head dominates Europe." Later, at Chamonix, with the landscape bathed in sunshine, there was the same Mont Blanc—yet different. It was in new relations, the part of another picture. In no distant time people will be making their Alpine excursions by aeroplane. They will see their Mont Blanc from above, and again all will be changed. The mountain will be just of the same bulk and height, but how different to the eye ! To the observer from this new height it will be shrunk incredibly, become a part, and only a small part, of an encompassing immensity.

What here happens to our mountain is what is happening in another field of vision—that of the soul and its relations. Our Church creeds are Alpine ranges, flung up out of the molten mass of human

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thought and experience. In this age of sceptical criticism it is common to regard them with a certain discredit, as though they were cloud images, mere mirages, instead of solid rock. But that, we venture to say, will be proved to be not the right view. The difference is not one of material, so much as a difference in our viewpoint. The change is not so much in them as in us. The facts they represent are still there, but they are no longer seen by us as a whole, but as parts of a greater whole. We have gained new positions for observing them. Our knowledge of science, of the history of our race, of the universe, and of the evolution of life in it, has carried us to a height which has changed our landscape for us. The creeds become now part of a vaster view of life, a view which comprehends them, and at the same time stretches beyond them ; a view which recognises their fullest value, but interprets them in a new way and on its own terms.

We propose here, from this newer standpoint, to examine the doctrine of man, as it has come down to us from the standards of Evangelical Protestantism. It was, as we all know, a doctrine inherited largely from the old Catholicism, but profoundly modified by the personal experiences of the Reformation leaders. The Reformation faith varied a good deal in matters of detail, but on its main principles there was a wonderful unanimity. It is writ large in the works of Luther, of Calvin, of Zwingli, of Bucer, in the Augsburg Confession, the decisions of the Synod of Dort, the Westminster Confession, the Longer and Shorter Catechisms, and in the Articles of the Church

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of England. In all of them we have substantially the same teaching of man and of God ; that man is a fallen being, universally and totally corrupt, incapable of any good, and exposed to eternal damnation ; that his one way of salvation is by the unmerited grace of God, secured through the atonement of Christ, applied to a certain number of the race, who are predestinated by God's eternal decree, and regenerated by His Spirit, the rest being left to their doom. This very stern and forbidding scheme is now generally known as Calvinism, and is largely thought of as though emanating expressly from the Genevan reformer. But that is an entire mistake. Read Luther's "De Arbitrio Servo," or Zwingli on "Predestination," or Melancthon, or Bucer, and you will find they are all as strongly for the Divine decrees, for man's total depravity, for the incapacity of the human will ; in short, for all the "Five Points," as the scheme was called, as was Calvin in his "Institutes." It was in its main features Catholic as well as Protestant, and as old as Augustine.

This system has been considerably watered down in these later days, but its main lines are conspicuous in the religious teaching and the great religious movements of our time. Its principles are those of the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century. Wesley was an Arminian, but he held as strongly as the Reformers to the doctrine of man's universal depravity, to the hopelessness of the human position apart from Divine grace, to the necessity of regeneration in order to salvation and the religious life. "Every good gift," says he in one of his sermons, "is from God,

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and is given to man by the Holy Ghost. By nature there is in us no good thing. And there can be none but so far as it is wrought in us by that good Spirit." And this doctrine, substantially, is preached to-day in every Evangelical pulpit in Great Britain, on the Continent, in America, in the Colonies—throughout the bounds of Christendom. Man is helpless of himself; to obtain salvation he must be born again, born from above.

These doctrines, in their course through time, have been attacked from various quarters. They were opposed by the early Socinians, who thought human nature was not so black as it was here painted; by the English deists, of whom Leslie Stephen gives so informing an account in his "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century;" on the Continent by Voltaire from his Theistic standpoint, by D'Holbach, Diderot and the Encyclopædists generally from the standpoint of Atheism. But to-day science has come in, and has taken the critical business in hand in quite another fashion. It finds the dogmatism of the earlier critics to have been as narrow as that of their opponents, and much less well founded. The matter of Evangelical religion it discovers to be a subject not for defamation, still less for ridicule, but for earnest and reverent observation. And that because it finds in these doctrines and movements the human soul at work in its highest and deepest; finds here the best materials for a constructive view of man and his development. It stands by the religious man; gazes into his inmost soul to discover, if it can, how he became religious; what have been the facts and experiences which have

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made him think as he thinks, and feel as he feels. In this way it has turned theology largely into psychology. In such works as Professor James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," and Höffdings's "Philosophy of Religion"—to name two books out of a multitude that might be cited—we have a research by thoroughly trained minds into the entire phenomena of the spiritual life. Science is examining the creeds, the lives of the saints, the world's devotional literature, to discover not what they tell about the universe, but what they tell about man. For it recognises that no creed has come fortuitously, but is a way—its own way—of telling about facts that have happened to man, experiences he has gone through. Our Bibles, our religious books, our systems of divinity are, it sees, a record of man's contact with reality, and his way of looking at that contact.

In this study science has some new instruments of observation, instruments denied to earlier observers. In its methods of historical criticism, its doctrines of evolution, of the conservation and transmutation of energy, of the solidarity of nature, of the continuity of causation ; in its geology, astronomy, anthropology, it has tools of inquiry as remote from Luther's or Calvin's as are Lick telescopes or the sensitized plates of spectrum analysis. And, furnished with these, it investigates the facts they deal with from entirely fresh standpoints ; sees them as parts of an immensely larger picture. But what we have now to observe is that the doctrines for which the Reformers contended, and which form the basis of the Evangelic faith of to-day, are, if under new names, as to the gist



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of them being practically reaffirmed by science ; set forth as part of its system of life. We may say that science, working from its materials, and in its own way, is republishing to us a doctrine of predestination, of human corruption and inability, of election, of regeneration, of Divine grace. But the difference between its doctrines and that of the Reformers is that, whereas the reformers looked at their Mont Blanc from a Chamonix valley, where the mountain seems to shut in and command the whole view, science looks at it from the height of an aeroplane, where it forms only part of a vaster immensity. From that height both man's past and his future offer a quite other prospect.

To begin with, Evangelical doctrine declares that man, to reach his true self, must be reborn, born from above. To this science says yes ; and adds to it that man has already been born several times over. Religion says the elect are predestinated to become saints. Science says that man was first of all predestinated to become man. Has it occurred to us that to be human at all, even in the worst specimens of us, is the effect of an election which has been working on our race through measureless ages ? When we watch our poor relations at the Zoological Gardens—chimpanzees, baboons and the like—have we asked “ Why are we not they ? ” There is only one answer. It was because a Power not ourselves chose us in the beginning, guided our way up, repressed others, in a hundred subtle ways made our calling and election sure. Embryology, tracing the growth of the fœtus before birth, shows the way we have come. It begins

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in the lowest animal forms, reproducing in those few prenatal months, as by a cosmic memory, all our pre-Adamite history—our fish stage, our reptile stage, our mammalian stage, up and up, from amœba to man. That was not our doing; it was “not of works lest any man should boast.”

And when the man is actually here—you and I—what next? The Evangelic faith reaffirms our helplessness, as of ourselves, to become good. We are experts at falling. Adam fell in his garden; we fall in ours. That is not a legend; it is a universal experience. If we are to get up and go on it will be by aid of a Power not ourselves. The force that made us man, out of something lower than man, must still work on us if there is to be a better man. All the religions affirm it, and that because all experience affirms it. It is worth while for Christians to remember that the doctrine of “the new birth” is not their property alone. Says Max Müller: “The Brahmins from the earliest times use the same expression and call themselves the reborn, the twice-born.” You can never set a man on his feet without some higher help. Take a slum district. Imagine it as composed entirely of degraded people. Segregate that district. Shut it off from all contact with higher types, with all the higher influences. What would be its history, its chances? So sure are we on that point, that our first thought for its improvement would be the importation of remedial forces, the working there of good people, the changing of its conditions, the pouring in of spiritual influence. The low must be lifted from above.

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But these influences ; where and how are they obtained ? How have the good become good ? You point to the thousand forces that have worked upon them ; to their moral and religious environment, to the atmosphere they have breathed, the doctrines they have been taught, the examples they have followed. All this, of course, goes into the work, but so far we are in the reign of mediated influence ; the influence of churches, of institutions, of ethical systems established ages ago. The next question is, Where did *these* come from ? That brings us to the founders, the great personalities who appear from time to time in the world, and give a new direction to its history. Read their story. The story of the religious beginners is always the same thing. For the explanation of their power they point in one direction. They received it from above. In themselves they were nothing. Said Jesus, " I can of mine own self do nothing." His every utterance is a witness to the fact that He was a mediator of power, a transmitter of force from the unseen. And the religious leaders who have followed Him, from Paul downwards, are all sure of the same thing. And not the leaders only, but the followers. What has made them, and kept them, has been not merely the action of their visible environment, but a secret energy that has wrought in their souls. Some testify to sudden conversions ; others to a steady, constraining influence, subtle and nourishing as the air we breathe, and whose constant operation they supplicate daily in their prayers.

All this is sheer fact. It is not theological speculation, but a piece of the science of life, the history of

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what has happened, and is happening in humanity. There are many other facts and many other doctrines implicated in the religious life as we know it. But these are the chief things, and they are without controversy. The old dogmas of which we spoke at the beginning were the attempts of the men of that time to account for the facts on the data they possessed. Their account of them was an imperfect one ; imperfect in some respects as would be the account of an eclipse by an Australian savage. They saw their mountain from a narrow valley, and they could not get out of their point of view. Their account of predestination, of election, of man as being saved, not by works, but by grace, of being nothing in himself, and everything by means of what is higher than himself, was a badly-phrased and a badly-limited account. But the facts are there—made luminous in the light of science. Its retrospect and its forecast show us man as, from the beginning, the subject of an eternal purpose, held in the grip of a Love that will not let him go. It shows us him as being perpetually made and remade by a spiritual power incessantly at work ; a Power showing itself in the field of history, now in the form of great divinely-endowed personalities, again in streams of influence that flood the world with new aspirations, new enthusiasms ; a Power whose work in the past is the promise and the presage, for the soul of man and for the world he lives in, of ever diviner manifestations.

## VIII

### RELATION

RELATION, that is, broadly speaking, the connection of one thing with another, is one of the everlasting puzzles of this most puzzling world. If you want to realise the possibilities of thinking on this subject, try your mental teeth—with sore possibilities of breaking them—on, say, Hegel's *Logik*. In fact, we are here up against all the deepest problems of transcendental metaphysic. We do not propose, however, to go far into that misty reason. There is matter enough for us in the plain, open ground of practical, everyday life. Yet the least book-learned of us has a bit of a philosopher inside him, a philosopher who asks questions which doubtless have troubled us sorely. We cannot go outside our doorstep without having them thrust upon us. Here, for instance, at our doorstep, is the universe. How are you related to that? There are only these two things existing, you and it. It seems a ridiculous sum in proportion. You, the tiny creature of a day, and this immensity of things which holds in itself infinity and eternity. And yet, amazing thought! it is your reality which makes *its* reality. It is your thought of eternity which creates its eternity; it is your idea of light and darkness, of hardness, softness, of beauty and

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ugliness, of change and permanence, which endows it with all these qualities. If you were to vanish it also would vanish—at least, for you. There would be no such things as matter and force, as distance and nearness, as whiteness or blackness, apart from you or someone like you, who had perception of these things. When you are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the all, and the insignificance of your personal self, remember, as a set-off, that the magnitude is your sense of the magnitude, and could not exist without you.

Of course, there are other minds besides yours, and they too carry universes inside them. But they do not carry yours. They carry their own, larger or smaller, with all the differences in their fund of knowledge. Your universe, let us repeat, is to so large an extent yourself; just as high and deep as you are, growing ever higher and deeper with your own growth. What then is the outside as related to our inside? Who shall say? Our simplest experiments here only serve to confound us. Take, for instance, yonder mountain. At the distance we are from it it seems like a cloud on the horizon. We approach it, and it changes with every mile we cover. Now we are at its foot. How different it is from the first view! We climb to its summit. It is something quite other from its appearance at the foot. We take a piece of it and pound it; submit it to chemical processes. Here again change upon change. Now which is the mountain; what is it? How far is its reality that of the cloud on the horizon, or the nearer view, or this chemical product of its separate

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parts? It is a thousand things, according to what you are and where you are. Is the reality of it then the succession of states it produces in your mind, or where is the reality? Philosophy has its answers, or its attempted answers to these questions. You may read them in Plato, in Berkeley, in Malebranche, in Kant. We suggest them here only as illustrations of the difficulty that waits for us at our doorstep, that everlasting difficulty which comes from the fact that, as Joubert puts it, "We see everything through ourselves; we are a medium always interposed between things and ourselves."

But that is only the beginning. Everything, we see, is related to ourselves. The next thing is that everything is related to everything else. Nothing can get on, can be anything, without the everything outside it. There would be no upper without an under; no big unless there were a little; no idea of darkness apart from one of light; of softness without hardness. The clash of opposites is, in fact, when we look into it, only a part of the general solidarity of things. It would assist our equanimity often if we had a clearer idea of the absoluteness of that solidarity; if we saw how close and how necessary was the relation of everything to the all. The other day your umbrella slipped from your arm into the mud. You picked it up abusing its perversity. Suppose it had not dropped; that the bend of your elbow had had no effect on it; or that in dropping it had hung in the air, or that the mud had failed to act in its normal way. That would have meant the breaking of a dozen natural laws, the effect of which, acting in a



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million directions, and over every region of space, would have smashed the whole system of things to atoms.

This intimate connection of things, the necessity of the one to the existence of the other, carries itself into the moral sphere and raises some strange questions there. We see, for one thing, what vast numbers of our pleasures are dependent on our pains. Without fatigue we should never know the bliss of rest. The idle loungeur on the quay yonder knows nothing of the happiness of the man just landed there, the happiness bred in him by the storms and tossings of the angry sea. It takes a toothache to make us understand the value of sound teeth. The sense of liberty has added nothing appreciable to your joy this morning. For the real taste of it, go to the man who has just escaped from the galleys, to an oppressed race that has just won its independence. This play of the opposites has set men in all ages wondering as to the ultimate relations of good and evil, as to how far the one can get on without the other. Far back we have the Chinese philosopher Lao Tse emitting these propositions: "What was it which made all recognise the beautiful as beautiful? It was the ugly; which made them know the good to be good? It was the bad. This being and not-being; the light and the heavy, the high and the low, the material and the non-material mutually produce each other." In ancient Greece we have Heraclitus maintaining the relativity of evil and its necessity as a condition of the good. That, too, is the doctrine of the neo-Platonists and the Alexandrians. It came up in

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Dionysius the Areopagite, and reappears in the Middle Ages in Scotus of Erigena. Augustine himself is not afraid to say that "if it were not good that there should be evil, evil would in no wise have been permitted by Omnipotent Goodness"; and again, "that God deemed it better to do good with evil than not to permit evil at all." We are not at the bottom of these questions yet, and perhaps never shall be. But it is at least a vastly helpful thing, in our fight for the good and the best, to know that the very thing we hate and dread as evil is, in some subtle way, linked with our purpose of perfection, and made to subserve its glorious end.

So far we have dealt with what may be called the ultimate relations. We see ourselves here wedged in a scheme of things which acts upon us whether we will or no. Let us come now to a more practical side of the question; to a sphere where we have ourselves a say in the matter. The outside thing will always influence us; we can never escape its impact. But over against this we can now set another truth; that what the outside will do with us, what aspect it will take, whether it come as a friend or an enemy, depends always on the quality of the soul on which it strikes. Crucifixion is one thing to the thief; it is another to the Christ. The soul by its texture, as it were, creates the event, gives it its character, clothes it in its own likeness. Moreover, as the soul develops, it gains the power of choosing its relations, and determines its degree of intimacy with them. It has an infinitude of nerves and feelers, and some of them touch one world and some another. According

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as you develop the upper or the under of these will be the world you live in. You can live along your nerve of sense and be a slave of appetite. Your standpoint here is at the bottom of the hill, where the vision is of the near things—the fashion of the hour, the cheap success, the moment's gratification. That is a horribly shifting standpoint, where any touch may upset you. Poor Apicius, the Roman epicure, with his soul's nerve attached to the dining-table, commits suicide because his fortune is reduced to a trifle of eighty thousand pounds, deeming life no longer worth living with so meagre a provision left for his appetite.

The truth is, we have not reached real manhood, the true glory of living, till we have soared above this region, and have reached another standpoint, a higher one, where our strongest relations are with the Unseen. Like our planet, we are not in our true position till we hang upon nothing; upon nothing that is visible. To work effectively upon our world we must be at a certain height above it. It is only there that we can get our proper outlook. It is with us as with the modern army, which sends up a balloon in order, from its elevation, to have the widest range of country in view, and so to find out the enemy's dispositions. It is only there that we can discover the true proportions of things, and separate the big from the little. It was said of Napoleon, as the supreme tragedy of his last days, "that no great principle stood by him." Supreme tragedy we say, for it is with principles, with unseen spiritual forces, that the true soul has its closest relations. Down

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below, the man shut up to mere sense perceptions is like the old-time navigator who, without a compass, steered by the nearest capes and headlands. Up above we steer by the stars.

Of the difference this makes in our attitude and action we could give endless illustrations. Let us take one from contemporary politics. We have heard much these last years of what is called British Imperialism. With prodigious energy the doctrine has been proclaimed, from Press and platform, of an Empire which is to be self-contained; where the Mother Country and the Colonies are to be shut in by a Chinese wall of tariffs and trade preferences; which is to supply all its needs from itself; which is to be guarded by an invincible army and navy; and which, self-supplying and independent of all outsiders, is to dictate its terms to the world and to pursue, regardless of these others, its own glorious career of power and self-aggrandisement. It is an immensely attractive programme—from the bottom standpoint. It appeals so readily to all those interests of pride, covetousness and egotism which are rooted in man's lowest instincts. But if our standpoint is only a little higher up, we see the essential falsity of the whole idea. From that position we recognise that it is a treason to the best in humanity. We are to be independent! But we are not made for independence. We are made for dependence, one on another. We want the whole world for our neighbour, and not just the man next door. We want the Frenchman's, the German's love and service in exchange for our own. This Chinese wall would make a Chinese empire for

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us, an empire shut in to our miserable selves, and, like China, an unloving, unloved entity, divorced from the world's brotherhood, rotting in its isolation. We will have no system that is less than a human system; we will have done with the politics of hatred and mistrust, the politics that appeal to our lowest self. Such politics spell disaster to the very material interests they are supposed to conserve; they are treason to that whole higher realm in which the soul finds its real life.

And this brings us to the summit of our ascent, the goal toward which through all the foregoing paragraphs we have been labouring. There is only one relation high enough and broad enough to reach all the necessities of the soul's life. It is our conscious relation to a holy God. When, from a personal experience, we have learned what this means for our daily conduct of affairs, for our attitude towards living and dying, towards the buffets of circumstance, towards the uncertainties of the future, towards our intercourse with our fellows, towards our inner conquests and defeats—the wonder grows in us that any mortal of us should attempt to get on without it. It is so constant and effective a solution of our difficulties. "Stand in your relation to God," and instantly your duty appears to you; instantly you can size up your personal worth, knowing, as St. Francis put it, that "we are just as great as we are in God's sight." From this standpoint we see ranged in line, and in their due proportion, the world's values, material and spiritual. Here, in a realm of change, we find our welcome, our immovable rest. Here is

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perpetual companionship, the heart's sweetest intercourse. Standing here we know ourselves at the meeting-point of all noblest influences. We touch new realms of being ; have companionship with

The great intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state.

We are where the great, the heroic things are done ; in touch with the " one great society alone on earth, the noble living and the noble dead." There are we in the soul's home, its sure abiding place, from which not time nor death will separate it. In contemplation of this supreme relationship we find ourselves saying with Augustine : " I desire to know God and the soul. Nothing else ? Nothing at all."

## IX

### PRODUCTS

PART of the interest of life lies in the infinitude of its phases. There is one of these which, when we consider the subtlety and range of its implications, seems hardly to have met with the attention it deserves. It is that of life regarded as a producer, a maker of things. We are familiar more or less with ordinary manufacture. You enter a mill and see what is going forward. It is a world of revolving shafts, of whirling wheels, of men and women who are tending them. All this multiform activity is concerned with one thing, the producing of something. You see the raw material—let us say wool—put through process after process. It is picked, sorted, washed, torn asunder, drawn by one set of machinery into coarse threads, then, in another set, into finer ones. The wool has become yarn, which, under further manipulation, comes out in its completed form as hosiery—stockings, vests, or what not. There have been a hundred other things going on in the factory—the lively chaff of the workers, love affairs, the circulation of news, the paying of wages, the longed-for clang of the bell which tells that the day's work is over. The



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whole of life plays itself in that workroom—the change of the seasons, the coming of summer, the dawn of day, the weird silences of the midnight hour. But the commanding feature there is production, the making of something, of this particular thing. Without that there had been no factory, no gathering of these toilers, no whirling of these wheels.

Come now to life itself, to these bodies and souls of ours which experience it. It opens up in myriad forms; you may interpret it anyhow—in the forms of philosophy, of science, of art, of amusement. But you will not get the whole of it, nor the chief part, unless you include in it the idea of the machine and the product. It is, above all things, a manufacture, a producing of something. Our body, to begin with, is a living mill. At its open gates rolls in the raw material, of air, of food, of sunlight, of pulsing ether vibrations, and these, with tireless industry, with a vast and complicated machinery, it proceeds to manipulate. The heart, the lungs, the skin, the billions of separate cells, all co-operate in turning this raw material into living tissue; into replacing our old dead body by a new one.

But that is only the beginning of the process. Inside the activity of our physical organs is going on another industry, the production, namely, of our internal consciousness, of our mental and moral states. By methods inconceivable to us the bodily machinery co-operates with an invisible machinery that has none of the attributes of body. “Does the body create the soul,” we ask, or “the soul create the body?” Or, “What are the terms of their relation?”

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We are there before a mystery with which philosophy from the earliest ages has busied itself. About it, we may quote one of Emerson's most suggestive passages, borrowed in its turn from a thought of Augustine : " I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble, in equal activity, in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of this body you see before you ; but this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in my grave ; but that they circulate throughout the universe. Before the world was they were."

This combination of body and soul has become in its turn a producer, and on the largest scale. By his age-long labours man has been gradually turning the raw material of the earth's surface into a manufactured article. He has wrought its soil into fields and gardens ; its iron and steel into railways, machineries, bridges, ships ; its clay and stone into houses, monuments, cathedrals, pyramids ; its woods and forests into furniture, into paper, into a thousand utilities and luxuries. The breath of his soul upon the world has created civilisations, religions, literatures, sciences, arts. Were he to pass away and his defunct world to be visited by some stranger from another sphere, he would probably be dubbed by him as above all things the creator, the producer. He would be known by what he had done, by these deposits of his nature which he had left behind him.

But is this all ? As a matter of fact, we have touched here only the fringe of life's products. What

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we have really to say on this subject concerns mainly a type of manufacture which has not yet been mentioned, that, namely, which goes on in our own separate interior, the deposits produced in the soul out of the raw material of our conscious experience. Amid all our manufactures let us not forget this one, the manufacture of ourselves. Our life is, amongst other things, a continuous extraction, from the raw material of circumstance, of certain inner states. The process follows laws of its own, different from those of our common chemistry, but not less certain or inevitable. The products are of vastly varying qualities, but all clearly distinguishable. Just as in cloth-weaving you get good, bad and indifferent values, according to the material you use and the way you use it, so is it with this interior process. From your environment, and the constant reaction of your will upon it, there falls, drop by drop, into your inmost being, a certain extract of result, an extract which, as it accumulates and solidifies, becomes you yourself. There is no escaping this law. It is as sure as mathematics. You have only to turn your eye inward, and you will see the process at work.

Let us observe now some of the ways it does work. Modern society has few theories about life, except to enjoy it on the easiest terms. Its ideal is to have abundance of money without the trouble of earning it; to eat good dinners and drink good wines; to taste all the excitements, all the gratifications, the lower ones by preference, as having the strongest flavour. In a French play the question is asked of a Paris fashionable, "How do you spend your time?"

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"*Je m'amuse*," is the reply. He amuses himself. This would be all very well if we happened to be living in a lawless universe. But we are not. Our pleasure-seeker goes his way, and meanwhile his interior nature the servant of the irrevocable law, goes *its* way. It begins by changing his sensations. He finds by-and-by that he cannot obtain from the same act the same delight. There is here operating what economists call "the law of diminishing returns." His body, as likely as not, turns traitor, and instead of ministering to his joy, develops in him some very joyless diseases. His "white nights" produce in him black mornings. Meanwhile certain deposits are forming. The dissipations seem all right, but the extracts from them are all wrong. As surely as from oxygen and hydrogen you obtain water, so surely from a life of this kind you obtain vacuity, ennui, boredom, a sense of the worthlessness of yourself and the world. If you want to know what laws we are under, try an experiment. Try to extract from a debauch the sensation which follows on an heroic deed, or on a piece of good work, or on the loving service rendered to a brother man. You could much more easily stay Niagara in its leap.

Life, we say, is an affair of products, and the products in their taste and quality, follow an irrevocable moral law. Your action may be a whim, but the result from it is never a whim. Our mill is every day grinding out its fabric. As in our Yorkshire factory, the cloth that is woven is the main business. You may talk of the appearance of the structure, of its beauty or ugliness, of the thousand incidents of its workrooms. They are worth talking of ; are parts of its life. But

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we repeat, the cloth is the thing. There were no mill at all but for that.

We can hardly expect beginners, life's apprentices, to understand all this. They have to learn their lesson. The really astonishing thing is to find grown-up people, after the experience they have had of life, content with such imbecile judgments of it, such imbecile experiments with it. They are full of the appearance of the mill, dinned with the clatter of its machinery, but apparently quite oblivious of the cloth it is weaving. Hence it is we find parents, who from their own hard struggles have extracted the fibre of a hardy manliness, offering their children an environment whose sure product will be effeminacy. A fortune, in current parlance, is a sum of money. Heavens ! what sort of a fortune is that ? It may be, and often is, in the hands of the recipient, a case of dynamite which will blow his manhood to atoms. When we have really grasped the idea of life's value being in its products we shall realise that the true fortune for our youth to start with is a training and a set of circumstances which will temper his faculties, call out his resources, and develop to the utmost his hidden powers. We shall work for an order of society whose normal action shall be to keep men at their best. The tendency here will be to the extinction of all conditions whose natural result is idleness, extravagance, the enemies of the moral tone. We shall approximate to that condition which Professor Marshall, in his " Principles of Economics," indicates as the ideal environment ; agreeing with him that " A moderate income, earned by moderate work,

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offers the best opportunity for the growth of those habits of body, mind and spirit in which alone is true happiness."

Life is a perpetual weaving of all sorts of raw material into all kinds of manufactured articles. We must always correct our judgment of the material by a study of the product. The study should relieve us from a host of superfluous fears. Why trouble about hardships, about difficulties, about renouncements, about "doing without" for ourselves and our children, when we see how these things turn out? They are the very stuff that a healthy human nature is calling for, the material of its highest quality of manufacture. But this inward look, which sets us free from so many anxieties, will in another direction sharpen our vigilance. There are environments from which human nature, in its normal condition, can only extract poison and moral death. And we have them to-day, encompassing, like the shirt of Nessus, multitudes of helpless lives. England is full of lethal chambers, into which souls are thrust to die as surely as do bodies when shut up in an atmosphere of carbonic acid gas. Have we ever worked out the equation between overcrowding and vice? Have we considered the moral product of the one-room household, of the common lodging-house? And that is all our society provides for multitudes of our countrymen. There is before us, as we write, a book just published under the title, "Where Shall She Live? or, The Homelessness of the Woman Worker," a book which should be in the hands of every politician, of every municipal authority, of every worker for social amelioration. It

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gives an account of the conditions under which our womanhood—save the mark—is being manufactured ; of the numbers of homes where, from the sheer lack of other accommodation, growing youths and girls sleep in the same room ; of lodging-houses into which women are forced, as the only alternative to the street, and where the moral conditions are unspeakable. Here, in the midst of us, in the midst of our civilisation, of our Christianity, are these devil's mills at work, grinding up the ever-renewed masses of human material—into what sort of product ? Ours is a great manufacturing country. Is it not time that, in these regions of it, we put up some new machinery ; that this costliest of our raw material, the souls and bodies of the new generation, may there be shaped to noble uses, instead of being torn and mangled there, with God's image in them gone beyond recognition ?

For life's products, if we will only give them a chance, are so wonderful. We receive the raw material at the beginning of the process. But the result is of a fineness often beyond our tracing. What chemistry, what analysis can fix for us the elements of a truly spiritual character ? What is the machinery that has wrought it to its exquisite beauty ? Has this finest of all results been consummated only to disappear ? Is this love, this faith, this glow of devotion no longer anything ? Who that believes in the sanity of the universe can believe that ? The early Fathers—you find it in Ignatius, in Irenæus—taught that the bread of the Sacrament went to the making of a spiritual, immortal body. That is an idea too coarsely materialistic for many of us. But character,



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the extract of the will's noble striving with the world, the subtle essences that have flowed out of loving deeds, out of sorrows bravely borne, the wisdom born of experience, the vision given to faith—here have you a product, an entity formed of elements which the body did not generate, and in whose fortune it does not share. The ultimate result of this high manufacture is too fine for mortal perception. It passes beyond our vision, to take its place and service in those higher spheres to which it is akin, and where it will find itself at home.

## X

### MYSTERY

WE are all in love with mystery. The instinct for it seems born in us. Children live in a wonder world, where everything is possible. They are not, perhaps, so childish as they used to be. Santa Claus is losing his vogue, and Jack the Giant-Killer is not what he was. Lamb dreaded the time which seemed to him coming when the fairy tale would be driven by science out of the youthful brain. "Think," writes he to Coleridge, "what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!" But no amount of cramming will ever extinguish, in young or old, the sense and love of wonder. The soul, which is to its innermost fibre wrought of wonder and mystery, will take care of that. In the midst of our science and our materialism there is nothing that holds people so much as a good ghost story. Our novelists trade on mysteries. Gaboriau, Edgar Poe, and our Conan Doyle owe their enormous vogue to the fact that they always strike this note. They kill the mystery eventually with an explanation, but it is while it is living, and, with all its dark suggestions, appealing to the imagination, that it holds the reader.

But the wonder faculty in man has had, and will

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continue to have, a far higher part to play in human affairs than that of being exploited, in so entertaining a fashion, by our modern novelist. It has been, in every age, a prime factor of religion. It has played there, one has to admit, at times a somewhat sinister part. All the extant religions have come to us from a remote age. They reach back to the childhood of the world. For we have to view them, not simply at the time of their historical inauguration, but in their connection with a far remoter past, a past which gave them their atmosphere, and had so much to do with their creation. And the childhood of the race, like the childhood of the individual, begins in what we may call an undisciplined wonder. Man was mastered by his imagination. The age of experiment, of research, by which we trace effects to their causes, had not dawned. What we now recognise as the reign of law was unknown. People did not know how to describe things, because, in order to describe things, you must know other things and the relation of one to the other. For them there was no gap between the possible and the impossible. And it was in these mental conditions that the early religions grew. As we watch them, in the various lands which gave them birth, in Babylonia, in Egypt, in India, in the West, and in the aboriginal tribes of Africa and Australasia, we note, amid all their varieties, one prevailing feature, which shows them as sprung from the same stage of inner development. It is the poetic rather than the scientific stage. The nature forces are everywhere embodied as personalities who preside, in very capricious and often very immoral

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ways, over the destinies of men. The procession of the seasons, reduced with us to the plain prose of the earth's movement round the sun, was by them regarded as the birth, death, and resurrection of gods and goddesses—their death the winter, their resurrection the spring. There were gods everywhere and for everything. Every wood had its dryad, every stream its nymph.

The human mind, at this period of its growth, turned out these ideas as naturally and as inevitably as acorns, wherever you plant them, will produce oaks. This was its solution of that central mystery—the world and our existence upon it. In the same fruitful soil arose legends and miraculous histories. Their incredibility added to their interest; for they appealed, not to science which was unborn, but to the older faculty of wonder, whose proper aliment they were. And around the stories were built up deeds and ceremonies and institutions. Those terrible beings, the gods, needed attention; when angry their wrath must be bought off. Hence arose sacrifices, with priests to offer them. The world from East to farthest West was covered with altar-stones. And the priest who was put in trust with these offices became the mystery man. He had the secret of the ritual by which alone the sacred rite could be properly performed. His profession became a caste of initiates, the depositaries of the ancient tradition, the keepers of the secrets of heaven and earth. In their hands worship became more and more a mystery, its highest rites being performed behind the veil, in the darkened adytum, shut off from the awe-struck multitude.

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The spiritual education of our race had reached this point when Christianity appeared. Let us be sure this education was no haphazard one. The world's childhood was as tenderly cared for as its maturer period. It was fed on the food it could digest. It is remarkable how, at this time, among the foremost peoples, the idea of religion as a mystery had been developed. While the Gospel, in its first age, was being preached in Palestine, in the Greek cities, and through the Roman Empire, it fell upon a soil where this idea had taken deep root. The religion of Mithras, which had come in from Persia, and the Orphic faith represented by the Eleusinian mysteries, had captivated some of the best and most earnest spirits of the time. We see in them both, indeed, a noble striving for the best and highest. Says Cicero: "Of all the excellencies that human life has to offer, the mysteries [that is, the Eleusinian] are the most precious; for they teach not only how to live with happiness, but also to die with a better hope." In both these faiths candidates were put through a severe discipline. They passed through baptism; they partook of sacred bread and wine, to the reception of which there was attached a mystic efficacy. For by this bread-breaking and wine-drinking they entered, so the teaching ran, into intimate fellowship with the divine; they partook of the hidden life, the life of God. And we see here, in what happened in Christianity, the filiation of one faith with another. No wonder that to peoples already possessed of these views the Supper of the Lord speedily took on the form of a mystery; no wonder

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that in Justin Martyr we find it spoken of as a sacrifice; that Irenæus declares the sacramental bread to be a divine food, the partaking of which confers immortality. The splendours of the Roman mass, and the feebler imitations of our Anglican priesthood, can indeed boast of a long ancestry. We find their prototypes not in the New Testament, but in outside cults, that go far back behind its time.

That brings us to the Gospel itself, which has also its mystery. When we open the New Testament we find ourselves in a region different from anything that modern literature offers us. We call the Gospels history, but they are not history in any sense similar to what we now call history. When we read the lives, say, of Cromwell or of Napoleon, all is plain sailing. We are in contact with immense events and remarkable characters; but there is, from beginning to end, nothing that our reason halts at, or stumbles over. All is in a sphere that we understand. With our maps and our chronologies we follow each development with the mind's easy concurrence. We applaud this; we condemn that; but we never ask, "Is this true? Is that credible?" But the Gospels! What are they? "Biographies of Christ," we say; but they are not real biographies. You cannot get a connected history out of them. Of the far greater part of Christ's life they contain nothing, and very little really of that brief period of it contained in His public ministry. Says Professor Burkitt: "I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from forty separate days. Nine-tenths at least of the public life of Jesus always remains to us a blank, even if we were to take every

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recorded incident as historical, and accurately reported." And of the four accounts from which we get these meagre details no ingenuity can produce a harmony. Two of them give birth-stories which it is impossible to reconcile ; the remaining two, one of which is the earliest of all, are on this subject entirely silent. Indeed, the puzzle as to their origin, their contents, and their relation to each other is such that we may say with Goethe, " It is like trying to drink out a sea to enter into an historical and critical examination of them." And their statements are such as at every point to baffle and confound the scientific sense of our time. With some minds, and of the first order, so far has this bafflement gone, that we have Jowett of Balliol, an Oxford doctor of divinity, declaring, in a letter to Mrs. Humphry Ward, that " they " (the Gospels) " are an unauthenticated fragment belonging to an age absolutely unknown which is adduced as the witness of the most incredible things."

The cultivated mind of the West has, for some generations now, been occupied with this mystery, and has recorded about it some very different verdicts. In the eighteenth century Voltaire, in France, while a sound Theist, made the Christian story, as it stood in Catholic orthodoxy, the butt of a merciless irony. Diderot handled it with an almost savage ferocity. Between them they established in the French mind a scepticism which has never since been dislodged. At the same period our English Deists dealt with the question in their own cooler British way. They took from the Gospels what they thought was good, and



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left the rest to take care of itself. Toland, who had studied at Leyden and Oxford, wrote "Christianity not Mysterious"; Tindall, also an Oxford man, a Fellow of All Souls', wrote "Christianity as Old as the Creation." Both of them reject the Creeds, take the law of nature as the guide and criterion, admitting nothing which is contrary to it, and reduce the Gospel message to its moral teaching. In the Western world of to-day we have the spectacle of one party insisting on the doctrine of the Creeds as the only solution of the mystery; another, represented by Loisy in France, and Schweitzer in Germany, declaring Jesus to be the mistaken preacher of an imminent catastrophe, world-end, and Messianic reign; and a third which declares its disbelief in an historic Jesus at all!

With all this before him, what is the plain man to do, the plain man, who has his soul to save; who wishes to make the best he can, morally and spiritually, with the life that has been given him? Well, there are some things here to be taken note of. To begin with, this Gospel mystery, does it not occur to us that it may have been *intended* to be a mystery? Do we suppose that these Palestine experiences, and the record we have of them, came at the time they did, and in the mental conditions of that time, simply by chance? The more we know of the world the less we believe in chance; the more evidence we have of a steady law of things, a thought-out evolution. The Gospels came in an unscientific age, because they dealt with a side of the soul which is beyond and beneath our present science, a sphere where its measurings do not reach. It is a singular thing that

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in France, where scientific empiricism has hitherto ruled so despotically, some of its foremost writers, such as Brunetière and Pressensé, are talking to-day of the utter bankruptcy of science as a solvent of life's real mystery. It fails to answer the soul's deepest questions. As Wundt puts it: "Science can only indicate the path which leads to territories beyond her own, ruled by other laws than those to which her realm is subject."

Christ is left to us in the Gospels as a mystery. But He is not less certainly a fact. He is not so much in the New Testament as behind it, the power behind it. He never wrote a line of it, but in every line of it we feel Him. There had been none written had He not been there, behind the scenes. Through the luminous haze which hangs over those marvellous years, we see the outlines of a Figure that is human and yet more than human; a spiritual Power that, working on men, lifts them far above their natural stature, and makes them heroes and martyrs. The figure shines there as a sun which hides behind its own brightness; a sun whose central heat comes pulsing through generation after generation, warming dead races into life, and, with all this prodigality of power, showing no sign of wasting or decay. When rationalism has put our Gospels through the mill, and by its pressure wrung out of them the last ounce of the improbable and the impossible, there still remains the mystery that created them, and the mystery of what they have wrought. That mystery is too much for any naturalistic interpretation. It points at least to this: to the penetration of our

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scheme by a vaster scheme, a scheme which shows the realm of science to be the threshold of a realm far higher, a realm of the spirit, to which we belong, and where alone our life must seek its explanation.

Modern criticism, especially of the Schweitzer school, makes much of the apocalyptic element of the Gospels, of the belief of the primitive Church, and of Jesus Himself, in an immediate Second Coming and general restoration. "What," we are asked, "do you make of the fact that this expectation was disappointed, and proved to be erroneous?" Are we to go away saying simply that our Christ, so divine, showed Himself here so very human? There is much more to say than that. Grant that the expectation erred as a question of time. It in no wise erred as a question of principle. What, in effect, does this belief of the early Church, and of subsequent ages, amount to? The Second Coming is a hope based on the cosmic experience, on the history of all that has gone before; the hope and belief, namely, that the divine visitations which, at long-drawn intervals, have projected themselves into our human sphere, lifting man from stage to stage of his spiritual progress, have not ended yet. The Coming, we see, has always a Second Coming behind it. What has been seen and done is the prophecy of what is yet to appear. The real mystery of religion is the mystery of a Love, a Redemptive Purpose that has been working in humanity from the beginning, that has already shown itself in ways passing our understanding, and that is preparing manifestations in the future beyond our highest thought.

## XI

### NEGATIVE

LIFE is a play of positive and negative. You cannot get one without the other. It is so in the realm of matter and force. Our earth is, amongst other things, an electrical apparatus. We build our electrical mechanics on the fact that the planet is constantly electro-negative. And all we know about positive electricity is that it appears to be the absence, or the comparative absence, of negative electricity. This perpetual opposition in the material realm is represented by the "yes" and "no" of the kingdom of thought. If anyone wants a brain-racking experience in dialectics, let him study his Hegel on this question of "yes" and "no." Out of it he constructs a whole universe for you. It is a very cloudy one, yet out of the interminable and incomprehensible subtleties of his word-play there does finally emerge upon the mind a tolerably clear image of his master-idea—an idea that has wrought so much in modern philosophy. This is that the machinery of the mind works always and inevitably through these two things, affirmation and negation, the "yes" and the "no." Your "yes" is always followed by a "no." The two fight each other, and the result is always a progress. For "no" strikes at the weak points of "yes";

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beats them out of the first affirmation, until finally the opposition results in a new affirmation which contains in itself the residual truth of the two. And what takes place in the sphere of thought is the model of what takes place in life. In act, in emotion, in will; and then, outside in the kingdom of cosmic and historical fact, you have a similar conflict and a similar result. In the Hegelian conception it is on this fundamental law that the eternal progress is based. Things are bound to go on because in the whole sphere of being they act in this way and no other. We may see later how this principle actually works in some important aspects of religion and of affairs generally.

In the meantime, let us come to our negative. Happily, in touching it, there is no need to involve ourselves in philosophic abstractions. There are homely, practical sides of it which we can discuss without any knitting of brows. The negative has acquired, on the whole, a rather bad name. It stands in the general mind for unorthodoxy in belief, for barrenness of character, for the absence of the things we want. You cannot prosper, apparently, in this world or the next by "no." There is truth in that. But what is equally true is that you cannot get on without it. Let us see its relationship to some commonest things. Have we sufficiently considered our negative pleasures? In a discontented mood it is an admirable exercise to reckon up all the evils from which we are at this moment free. When you are worrying over your money loss is it not something that you are free from toothache and ague

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and thunderstroke ; that you are not in gaol ; that no folly of your own, or false accusation of another, has robbed you of your character ? Our joys are half made up of negatives. The tired shopman, after a year's grind at the counter, as he wakes up at the seaside on the morning of his holiday, realises as a large part of his bliss that to-day there is no selling of ribbons, no hurrying of business, none of the old weary routine. The reward of labour, denied to the idler, is this glorious interval of no labour. Our finest moments are constructed often out of a negative backed by a positive. To reach port after being tossed on stormy seas ; to wake after a hideous dream and find it is not a reality ; to watch from your cosy shelter the pouring rain, not a drop of which can reach you ; to win after what seemed certain defeat : it is in the clash of these opposites that we touch our vividest joys. To get our brightest effects we need a black background.

It is astonishing how coolly we take our negative mercies. If we had a week of blindness we should begin to understand what non-blindness means, what it is to wake up of a morning with unimpaired eyesight. The man who is crippled with rheumatism could give lessons on the privilege of being able to swing one's limbs without pain or ache. It would be a wholesome experience for the bored dwellers in Park Lane to exchange their palaces for a twelvemonth with the residents in Bethnal Green. The modern Free Churchman who so eloquently proclaims his grievances might, for a mental change, go back in thought for a few centuries—to the time when his

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present privileges did not exist ; when his ancestors had their religious meetings broken up by pistol shots ; when for uttering opinions such as he now fearlessly maintains he would have been prisoned and racked. How easy we all are now in our languid convictions ! We can be Arians or Socinians or even atheists and nobody interferes. We should have needed more courage in our heresies had we lived in the seventeenth century, when an English Parliament made the above-named opinions punishable with death. Milton in that age declared the liberty to think and to speak one's thought the greatest of all liberties. We have it, and we forget to praise God for it. We should understand it better if it were taken from us.

In this connection it should be an instruction to us, in the management of our negative, to remember God's way in these matters. His negatives are so beautifully significant, as compared with the violence of our positives. We proclaim Him with such assurance as on our side in the dispute ; assume His thunders so confidently as against our adversary. And all the while He is so silent, so patient. While we denounce our heretic He goes on feeding him, giving him board and lodging, making His sun to shine upon him, offering him all the hospitality of His universe. There is a beautiful Jewish legend which to-day we may well ponder. Abraham, father of the faithful, one day received into his tent an aged traveller. After sharing his meal with the stranger the patriarch proceeded to offer his evening sacrifice. To his amazement the guest declined to join in the



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prayer and thanksgiving. Indignant at this impiety, he chased him from his tent. Later the Lord interviews His servant, and asks why he had expelled the old man. "Lord, he refused to acknowledge Thee!" "What!" is the reply; "I have borne with this old man for eighty years, and you could not bear with him for two days!" After that, we read, the patriarch helped all and sundry whatever might be their religious belief. This is not to say that one belief is as good as another. Neither the Divine silence nor the Divine utterance tells us that. The lesson is as to how to treat our brother, whatever his opinion. It is the lesson which Luther, in his great reforming days, taught the German people: "Therefore it is vain and impossible to compel by force this belief or that belief. Force does not do it. It is a free work in faith, to which no one can be forced."

We shall have more respect for the negative when we remember that, whenever it has been seriously maintained, it is for the sake of some greater, deeper positive which it is sought to realise. The reformer often begins by a "no" in order to get to his "yes." He is by his contemporaries branded as a destroyer, but what he wants to destroy is some obstructing wall that obscures the view, that stops the human progress. Socrates is condemned as an infidel, the man who had more positive truth in him than any man of his time. Sentence is pronounced on Jesus as an upsetter of the Roman government and of the Jewish religious system. The English religious world still thinks of Thomas Paine simply as a denier, an "infidel."

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He lies under mountains of orthodox denunciation. What does our average religionist know about him? He knows nothing of the fact that this Quaker soul was one of the bravest affirmers of his time; that this man, the friend of Washington, the friend of Franklin and Lafayette, spent his life without fee or reward in battles for all that is sacred in humanity—battles in the cause of universal peace, in the cause of negro emancipation, in the cause of the child, in the cause of the poor. Whether in America fighting the cause of independence, or in the French Convention upholding the rights of the people, he ever founds himself on principles which we now recognise as the alphabet of ethics. He fights for liberty in France, but imperils his life in opposing the execution of the king, in denouncing the excesses of the Revolution. The man was a denier because he was first of all, and through all, an affirmer. His so-called denial of Christianity was the denial of a presentation of it which has become as incredible to us as it was to him. Let us be sure of this, that a true negative is always a better help to the spiritual kingdom than all the false and interested affirmatives.

We speak here of false affirmatives, but what a chapter might be written on false negatives! In the fast society of the Georgian era there was a project discussed with mock seriousness, but with much vivacity, to have "not" taken out of the Commandments and put instead into the creed. There were a great many then—and they have not lacked successors—who had practically adopted the suggestion. In the history of religion we have indeed some

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queer inversions of "not," and that in dead earnest. Montesquieu recounts of the Tartars of Genghis Khan that their faith enjoined on them not "to put a knife in the fire, not to lean on a whip, not to strike a horse with the bridle." These were accounted deadly sins. On the other hand, it was no crime to violate a trust, to steal, to kill a man. Christianity in its historic development exhibits to us also strange and disastrous misplacements of the negative. How often in the supposed interests of piety it has said "no" to knowledge! On the same North African soil where Clement and Origen preached the Gospel as a world system allied to all science and all philosophy, we have Tertullian exclaiming, "What have Athens and Jerusalem in common, what the Platonic academy and the Church? We have no further need of a desire for knowledge since Jesus Christ, and no further need of scientific research since the Gospels." For how many centuries has the Church with this "no" barred the way to truth? Even the Reformers dwelt in its shadow. We read of noble-hearted Melancthon as scared by the discoveries of Copernicus and demanding that his theses should be repudiated as irreligious. Seemingly it will take generations yet before the Church emancipates itself from this false negative, before it allows its children the full use of their eyes.

There are, we perceive, ill-looking negatives in belief, and there are worse ones in character. We shall have another and a closing word on that, but before we get to it let us take note of a feature here, the remembrance of which may well help us out of

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our self-despairs. We have most of us, by this time, run up against our limitations. We know so well all the things we are not. Heavens ! what people can do with their hands, with their voices, with their brains, that we cannot do ! Our little bit of faculty stands in our mental realm, amidst such desert wastes of no faculty ! We can perhaps mend a shoe, or scrub a floor, but where is our music, our artistry, our eloquence, our learning ? All to seek, may be. One bit of "yes" against a thousand thundering "noes." When we thus condole with ourselves, let us remember two things. First, that this is the lot of us all. There is not one of us, however gifted, who does not find in every man he meets some skill, some knowledge he himself does not possess. It is precisely the gifted men who, as they pit themselves against life and its mysteries, feel most their weakness, their pigmy size against this immensity. The other thing to note is that our personal defects are one of nature's cunning bonds by which she ties society together. I can do this thing ; you can do that. Just where I am weak as water there you feel your strength. It is here, by the voids in my nature and the countervailing force in yours ; by the idealist's lack in the practical, and the practical man's lack of the ideal ; by the musician's inability to bake his bread and the baker's thirst for good music ; it is thus that nature proclaims our solidarity, our essential oneness and brotherhood, and works towards their fuller realisation. Our negative is a proclamation, in sign language, that we are members one of another.

But all this must not permit us to forget that we

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shall never get on either as souls or as citizens by negatives alone. If you find life empty it is because *you* are empty. A full soul finds always a full world. "No," of itself, is no man's food. If you stay in it you will be starved. Its one service is as a step towards a "yes." The ennui, the misery of modern society, lies in its want of spiritual conviction, in its failure to grasp a religious reality. And nothing that rank, or fortune, or circumstance can offer will fill that void. The inner hunger here can be satisfied from only one source. For man is made for God. His emptiness in himself is the negative that requires this Positive to make him a man. That vacant spot is the place where God would incarnate Himself in us

Though Christ in Joseph's town  
A thousand times were born  
Till he is born in thee  
Thy soul is still forlorn.  
The Cross on Golgotha  
Can never save thy soul;  
The Cross in thine own heart  
Alone can make thee whole.

## XII

### CHARACTER

CHRISTIANITY appears to offer, to each separate age as it comes, its own special problem. Its problem for our day seems more fundamental than that of any which has preceded it. And this mainly because there has never been a time when so keen and penetrating a scrutiny has been turned upon it. Never has collective humanity been in such a condition for discussing vital questions; never before has it possessed such an intellectual equipment, such a store of knowledge and experience, such an apparatus for intellectual analysis. And this cultivated insight, directed upon the Christian origins, has now opened up an entirely new set of difficulties for Church orthodoxy. The startling thing is the revelation which modern criticism offers of the mental poverty of early Christianity. It began on a most limited stock of ideas, many of which were wrong. As the German Eucken, one of the most spiritual of modern thinkers, puts it: "In many ways we are out of sympathy, not only with the ideas and dogmas of early Christianity, but also with its contemporary feelings and tone." We have an entirely different, and infinitely wider conception of the universe from

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that which the early believers held, and we cannot help bringing that conception into play in judging of their beliefs.

This position confronts all the serious thinkers of all the Churches. Rome has felt it in its modernist movement. The late Father Tyrrell, in his "Christianity at the Cross Roads," and M. Loisy in "L'Evangile et L'Eglise," deal in the frankest way with those early conceptions. They go to the fountain-head, and lay bare, in a pitiless criticism, what seems the ignorance of Jesus as He is exhibited for us in the Gospels. They insist that the main feature of His teaching was eschatological; that it dealt with an immediate Messianic catastrophe, in which the old order of things was to pass away, and the Son of Man of the Book of Daniel was to appear in the clouds, bringing judgment and a new heaven and earth. This also the apostles taught and the first disciples believed. Their creed was an adaptation of the current Jewish Messianism, which events proved to have been mistaken. On the Protestant side the same view is strenuously held by a whole array of modern German scholars. It is assumed as evident by Keim, by Johannes Weiss, by Pfleiderer, and in a modified form by so orthodox a theologian as Baldensperger. Later still comes Schweitzer, who in his "Quest of the Historical Jesus," declares it to be the last word in New Testament criticism.

Orthodoxy has here undoubtedly a battle to fight, and one may suppose that it will make a reasonably good fight. Accepting the fact, as it must, that Jesus entered into the Messianic views of His age, it will



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ask, and quite rightly, how He dealt with it ; whether He did not transform and spiritualise it ? And if it be admitted that on the question of an immediate appearance His words, as reported, show a mistaken view, is not this sufficiently accounted for by the apostolic doctrine of the *Kenosis*, by which Jesus, as an historical Person, emptied, humbled Himself, and took on Him the form of a servant, a form which included a mental limitation ? All that and much more, we repeat, can be said. What we want here, however, to observe and to maintain as a thesis is that, as a defence of Christianity against the modern attack, this is not the best or the truest line to follow. Ours is an age greedy of facts, and the real defence of the Gospel is in an appeal to facts. And the fact is that Christianity has shone, not in the intellectual systems with which, age after age, it has been successively associated, but in the work it has wrought in human character, in the emotion it has created, in the range of feeling it has touched, and the effect of those states of feeling upon the will and on the conduct of life. A study of history will, we believe, show that the system of ideas under which the Church has lived has been always a hypothetical and movable one ; that the real secret of the Gospel has never resided there ; that the ideas have been always a rind enclosing a precious fruit ; a channel along which has flowed a stream of power, other and greater than the ideas themselves.

The Church's mental systems, we say, have been largely provisional. Its strength has not lain there. It has changed its ideas from age to age. The early

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Christians began with the notion of an immediate advent. That view disappeared. For some centuries its doctrine of Atonement was that of a ransom price paid to the devil. Nobody holds that now. Let anyone compare the theology of the Church during the period of the Greek fathers, the theology of Clement of Alexandria, of Origen, of Theodore of Mopsuestia, of the great Basil, with that of the Latin fathers which succeeded it, with that of Augustine and his followers, and he finds two completely opposing views of God, the world and man. What a break between the views of Protestantism and those of mediæval Catholicism ! In later times, in the very bosom of evangelicalism, read the controversies between Wesley and Fletcher on one side, and Whitefield, Hill and Toplady on the other ; what a chasm between these men and their ideas as to God's will and His purposes towards men ! And in our lifetime, what a revolution in orthodoxy itself in its doctrines of creation, of inspiration, of future punishment, of the state of the heathen, from what obtained forty years ago !

You may draw the net closer. The same change of mental view is observable not only in generations of the Church's life, but also in one and the same individual. Read the lives of eminent saints and you will find them passing through the most startling changes of theological opinion. New Testament critics are practically one in tracing a vast development of view in St. Paul, as evidenced in his letters to the Thessalonians as compared with his later Epistles. Students of Augustine find him, on many subjects, at

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different poles in his earlier and his later writings. Luther's great Reformation writings are those between 1520 and 1523. He was not the same man after the Peasants' War. Closer to our own time read William Law, the saint of the eighteenth century, the writer of "The Serious Call," the inspirer of John Wesley. In his earlier period he is the stiff High Churchman, holding all the High Anglican doctrines. Later we find him the disciple of Jacob Behmen, following the Silesian seer in his view of heaven and hell as states of the soul rather than as a future palace or prison, throwing aside the current views of the Atonement, regarding it not as a matter of debtor and creditor, but as a process by which the jarring elements are brought back to unity, as the birth of a heavenly life within us, not the settlement of an account by a transference of merit. Indeed, is there a Christian man of us to-day, who has reached or passed middle age, who has not to record in himself an equal revolution of ideas on vital subjects?

But now observe in all this a central feature. The essential power of Christianity, as exhibited in these succeeding generations, in these holy lives, never really depended on the intellectual system which they had embraced. St. Paul, in his variations of view, never ceased to be an apostle of Jesus Christ; he never ceased to "keep the faith." The first generation of believers, while cherishing an idea of the immediate future which we have renounced, were, notwithstanding their mental defects, changed men, filled with the Spirit, bringing forth "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," exhibiting, in a pagan and hideously corrupt society,

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the miracle of the spiritual life. Augustine was saintly at the close as at the beginning of his Christian career. William Law, in the time of his later mysticism, as in the period of his High Anglican doctrine, was the same beautiful soul, wedded to God and holiness. Have we, too, in our separate selves, become less in love with Divine things, less in love with all that Jesus stands for to the soul, because of the enlargement of our speculative view?

It is here, in the new inner states created, in the tremendous impact upon character, that Christianity has ever found its power; it is here it finds its answer to all the challenges of our time. Matthew Arnold found the secret of the Church's early victories in the overflowing happiness with which it filled its people. Darwin, who had no theological prepossessions, found in Tahiti dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. "The teaching of the missionaries," says he, "is the enchanter's wand; the march of improvement consequent on the introduction of Christianity throughout the South Seas probably stands by itself in the records of history." Where, outside the sphere of this influence, could you find a condition of inward being like that recorded of himself by John Nelson, the Yorkshire stonemason, who, imprisoned in a filthy dungeon for preaching the Methodist Gospel, says: "My soul was like a watered garden, and I could sing praises to God all day long. For He turned my captivity into joy, and gave me to rest as well on the boards as if I had been on a bed of down."

The evidence is that wherever the primitive Gospel

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has been proclaimed by men possessed of its spirit, however crude the mental envelope in which it has been wrapped, it has exercised this extraordinary power—the power of changing men, of turning them upside down and inside out. It has accomplished the fact which Schopenhauer declares impossible—of making bad men good. It has produced conversions ; that process which the late William James, that clear-headed, superbly-equipped student of psychology, registers as one of the best certified facts of human experience ; the process whereby, to use his words, “ a man identifies his real being with the germinal part of himself ; and does so in the following way : he becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous with a More of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside him, and which he can keep in touch with, and, in a fashion, get on board of and save himself, when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck.”

Amid all the clashings of modern belief and non-belief ; amid all the assaults which are made to-day on the citadel of religious orthodoxy, there is one thesis about which, we imagine, all fair-minded men would be found to agree. It is that some such force as this, wherever it is to be found, is the one thing we need for the reorganisation of society, for the attainment of human well-being. Amid all our sciences the one needed science is that of making men good. It is an age of machinery, but none is being invented for turning brutal, drunken, wife-beating men into sober citizens, into kind-hearted builders of homes. Any Socialist who can see farther than his

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nose-end must recognise that his State scheme, however cleverly organised, can come to nothing so long as his material is bad. You may pound together all the economics of Marx, all the arguments and figures of Lassalle, of Bernstein, of our English Fabians, and you will fail to extract as a product one drop of an elixir which will create the thing that alone makes life worth living—a state of inner blessedness. Is there in the whole Socialist machinery, even if it work overtime, a means of producing “love, joy, peace, gentleness meekness, temperance, faith”? Until it can, it must cease boasting of being, in itself, a new highway into the human paradise.

If what has been here said is a correct interpretation of history, it enables us to see what has been, and is, Christianity's real place in the world. It has not been, either in its beginning or in any subsequent phase, free from speculative error. Its function has been, not that of a philosophy, but of a force. It has offered, not so much a theory about life, as life itself. Wrapped up often enough in crudest forms, it has nevertheless vindicated itself as the agent of that greatest of miracles, the reformation of character. It has accomplished the one thing which neither law, nor police, nor science, nor material conditions has been able to achieve; it has given men in all circumstances, even the worst, the sense of inward peace and blessedness. Its beginning marked the inflow from the unseen of a great, unique spiritual power. It was the impartation to man of a new deposit of that “treasure in heaven” which man was created to receive, and which waits to discover itself yet more fully. In

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saying this, are we not describing what is manifestly the Church's supreme function? Its one business is to receive, to fill itself with this Divine life, that it may impart it to men. It is to be a reservoir of faith, of joy and strength, that may flow into and heal the world's broken heart. The preacher can only speak effectively as he, in word and deed (for his deed must be a speech), transmits this sacred energy. No assault of scepticism can touch Christianity so long as it remains a healer of souls.



### XIII

### SAINTS

NOVEMBER is not, as a rule, a cheerful month, but it begins well. Its first day is in the calendar dedicated to "All Saints." There is a thrill in those words for Christian souls. What a history, what a tragedy, what a vast hope do they contain! And also what a problem! For sainthood is a problem for the modern mind. In fact, it offers a cluster of problems. Science has begun to busy itself on the subject, and we have books written on "the psychology of saints." Serious thinkers are asking themselves how far the lives and ideals of those who in earlier times earned this title can be taken as models for our own day. If the term is to be retained; if the future is to have its "saints," what will they be like? Can the new conditions produce the old type; or shall we have a new species, conforming to the fresh conceptions of what constitutes the fullest and highest life?

Rome brings it as an accusation against Protestantism that it does not produce saints. It certainly does not produce them in the Roman way. One may admit that in some aspects of this question Protestantism has shown a certain carelessness. Why has it no canonisation? Is it that it has produced

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no character worthy to be canonised ? We all of us know our St. Paul, our St. Augustine, our St. Francis. But there is no Protestant name with the prefix. The Roman method of singling out some name of eminent spiritual quality ; of examining all the facts of the career it represents ; of hearing evidence for and against ; and finally, if it passes all the tests, of adding it to the great roll of the past ; of offering it as an example and an object of veneration to its adherents, has undoubtedly much to be said for it. Comte has taken over the idea in his enrolment of the human worthies whose achievements form part of his " religion of humanity." Where the Roman system breaks down is in its restriction of the title to a certain type of man ; to a type which conforms to its ideas of doctrine and of life ; ideas which the modern world has outgrown, and which the future promises to leave still further behind.

Sainthood, for the modern mind, leaves, indeed, a vast number of questions to be cleared up. Its idea has been persistent throughout history, shedding upon it, even in its crudest forms, a mystical light. It reveals, perhaps as no other word does, the heights and deeps of human nature, its spiritual significance, its root in the unseen. You get the word in all languages ; the thing is native to man. The primitive idea is associated with that of separation. Certain things, certain persons are set apart, dedicated to the service of the gods. At first the idea is not definitely connected with morality. The Power whose aid is sought is generally as savage as his worshippers. The priest is there for ceremonies, for incantations. His

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sanctity lies in performing them according to rule. That idea has been long-lived. As late as the time of Jesus, as Hausrath puts it: "The Pharisees who had come down from Jerusalem desired to ascertain whether Jesus immersed His hands according to precept before eating; whether He, in so doing, held them upwards or downwards; whether He moistened them as far as the elbow, or the knuckles, or the tips of the fingers only."

But side by side with this view another came into existence. In Israel the prophets appeared, the prophets who proclaimed that goodness was better than sacrifice, and a pure heart than burnt-offering. In Greece, and afterwards in Rome, the philosophers were the prophets. While the priests served the temples, Socrates and Plato, Seneca and Epictetus spoke to the soul. And long before that day the world had seen beautiful characters who knew that holiness was an affair of the heart and the life. We find this epitaph on the tomb of an Egyptian lady, written ages and ages back: "My heart inclined me to the right when I was still a child, not yet instructed as to the right and good. And what my heart dictated I failed not to perform. And God rewarded me for this, rejoicing me with the happiness which He hath granted me for walking in His way." And what Egypt knew and felt on this matter was known and felt in India. Of old it was enacted there that the student of Divine things must, as a condition, subdue his passions, renounce the acquisition of wealth and fame, and even the idea of gaining reward in another life.

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It is, however, with the Christian idea and story of sainthood that we are here chiefly concerned. The history is a strange one, crammed, as we have said, with problems. It opens magnificently with the New Testament records. In Jesus we have the life which through all these ages has stood for the supreme example of inner purity and spiritual power. In the Acts and the Epistles the people who are gathered into the Christian community are described as "saints." And the term here is no ceremonial one. It puts into a word the loftiest idea of moral and spiritual character. These people are declared to be under the power of a Spirit whose fruits are "love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith." That they did not in all cases reach the ideal; that there were, as the letters to Corinth show, terrible lapses from it, is not to the point. The fact to be considered is that there had come into the world an idea of living like this; a flaming light of idealism with which every humblest member was to be inspired. How these poor, unknown ones continued to act up to it is shown in the testimony of Athenagoras, generations after: "But among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. When struck they do not strike again; when robbed they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them and love their neighbours as themselves."

That was an entirely respectable sainthood, to say the least. Then came some new developments. After

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the great persecutions, the martyrs, both those who had perished and those who had withstood the test of torture, were made the subjects of special veneration. They were saints of a new class, an *élite*. During this time and later we find asceticism elevated into a cult. Men withdrew from the world and lived in the desert. They practised celibacy and every bodily rigour. Simon Stylites mounts on his pillar; some starved themselves to death. Heaven was to be won by a process of dehumanisation. This idea has survived through all the Catholic ages. All the great names of Catholic history were first and foremost ascetics. Francis of Assisi ate his scanty meal off the ground. Bernard wrecked his health for life by his early austerities. St. Louis, on the throne of France, never gave himself a whole night's rest. The stories of Ignatius, of Liguori, of Vianney, are full of incredible self-inflicted hardships. The recently-published life of Cardinal Vaughan tells of his wearing an iron circlet, pointed inward with cruel spikes, clamped on to his arm, which he wore to his death.

The reading of the lives of the saints, as in Mabillon's prodigious "*Acta Sanctorum*," is a queer study. The difficulty is to know how much of it to believe. For here the pious imagination has given fullest proof of its power. Rome demands for the canonisation of a saint that at least two miracles shall be placed to his credit. There has been no difficulty in supplying the miracles. The growth of legend round a great name is well illustrated in the *Lives of St. Francis*. The saint of Assisi died in 1226. His bosom friend Frater Leo, in his "*Speculum Perfectionis*," gives an

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account of him from the standpoint of a contemporary. It is full of extraordinary things, sufficiently hard to believe. But two generations later came Bonaventura's *Life of Francis*, and here the legendary seeds have become a forest growth. Jack and the Beanstalk is a pale effort of imagination compared with this prodigious effort of the mythopœic faculty.

Indeed, man's love of the wonderful, especially in religion, has made it a hard task, in these saint stories, to find the real man. If anyone wants an illustration of the atmospheric illusions in which these extraordinary lives are enveloped, let him study the *Life of Vianney*, the *Curé d'Ars*, as recorded in the bulky volumes of his Catholic biographers. Here is a man of our time, living in the France of the Second Empire, in a parish close to busy Lyons. Read especially the chapters dealing with his encounters with devils. When you are faced with stories of this kind, written almost yesterday, and concerning a man of yesterday, you learn to sympathise with Sir Walter Raleigh, who laughed at his own notion of writing a history of the world, when he found contradictory and impossible accounts of things that had happened under his own window.

Yet, when all the discount has been taken off these histories, when all allowance has been made for legendary accretions, the bare fact, when it is reached, is a sufficiently remarkable one. Not to mention the humbler and unnoted examples, we find in the characters that stand out in these records a kind of men worth all our study. They stand for the supremacy in human affairs of the spiritual principle. There is

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in them a fund of power not explainable by any materialistic hypothesis. It is evident there is a genius of holiness just as there is a genius in music or in mathematics. But it is not enough to say that. When we speak of genius here, what do we mean? At bottom it is a greater receptivity. The vision of the unseen; the conception of a higher life that controls the lower one; the love of the Highest and the Holiest which these souls display, does not mean that the saints are in possession of treasures denied to other men. The grace of which they partake is a common grace. The spiritual power they touch is a power which is around us all, waiting for entrance. What separates them from the rest of us is a finer faculty for discerning this, a thinner barrier for the obstruction of its inflow. All they know and feel is objectively there, the common property of the race. We must wait for their vision till we have reached their level.

Sainthood, ~~we say~~, is the concrete presentation of the spiritual element in humanity. It is the incarnation in human personalities of that Infinite Holy which is eternally seeking to make us share its blessedness. But here arises a question—~~the question we asked at the beginning~~. How far do the saints of the past stand for the true expression of the idea? Does sainthood, in the conception which is to rule the future, consist necessarily, as they imagined, in a withdrawal from the world's activities, in celibacy, in semi-starvation, in maiming and torturing the body, in a denial of the human joy of living? Are saints only of one type, the Church type? Are the



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men of affairs, the inventors, the captains of industry, the artists, the musicians, to be by the nature of their calling excluded from the category? Are their products to be classed as non-sacred? Is sainthood of the cloister only, and never of the market-place?

That is a swiftly-dying, if not already an actually dead idea. It is one which shuts God into one corner of His world. In its place has dawned a conception which is destined to remain. It is that which regards holiness as essentially a wholeness, which sees the saint as the complete man, and everything which tends to his completion as a holy ministration. Not in the torture of his body—as though God loved cruelty!—but in the development of its highest power; not in the restriction of his vision, but in such broadening as helps it to take in the whole of things; not in meaningless austerities, but in a joyous helping of one's fellows; not in the selection of one class of duties as specially consecrate, but in the pious dedication of our common work as a service of God: it is on these broader bases that the modern world will build its saintliness. Zwingli showed that he had caught the true Protestant conception when, in his "Confession of Faith," written just before his death, he speaks of "that future assembly of all the saintly, the heroic, the faithful and virtuous; when Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham . . . will mingle with Socrates, Aristides and Antigonos, with Numa and Camillus, the Scipios and the Catos, and when every upright and holy man who has ever lived will be present with his God." Bossuet held up the passage to the reprobation of the faithful, and even

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Luther denounced it as unchristian. To-day we hold the Swiss reformer as here better inspired than the German. In the earliest days of Christianity Justin Martyr had said the same thing. He claimed Socrates and Plato and all holy men of every name and race as indwelt of the Logos, the Light of the World. It is the mind of Jesus, who saw men from the East and the West sitting down in the Kingdom of God. The saints are the men and women in whom the Divine Spirit works, and who in their day and generation listen to its voice and obey its call.

## XIV

### INTEREST

“ IF thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.” So we read in Exodus—an entirely beautiful and human ordinance. Was there a prevision in the framer of it, one wonders, of the fact that the sons of Abraham would figure so conspicuously in after times in money-lending cases? Theology has squabbled a good deal on this question of interest. In the early Christian times and on into the Middle Ages, it condemned the levying of it as contrary to the Divine law. As late as the time of Edward VI. an Act describes “the charging of interest” as “a vice most odious and detestable, and contrary to the Word of God.” Calvin was one of the first to show that this was an entirely erroneous view, and that the supposed Scriptural denunciation of interest rested on a misinterpretation. Some Socialist schools have since re-echoed the earlier theological note, and indicted interest-taking as part of the robber policy of capitalism. It will take a great many more arguments than have yet appeared to convince the plain man that there is anything wrong in the business. Where a commercial transaction yields a profit to both sides one fails to see any injustice. Exodus was against the hard, merciless

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man, and not against the ordinary trader. The borrower uses the lender's money for a given time, and pays for the use of it. He does so on the expectation of making a profit from this use which will more than recoup him for the interest he pays. The principle here is precisely the same as if he had borrowed the use of the lender's horses or his reaping machine, and paid for that. The advantage is mutual. The transaction rests on common-sense. It is the basis to-day of the whole world's commerce and industry.

We are not, however, proposing here to discuss the affairs of the money market. We shall use the term "interest" and "compound interest" in a wider and deeper sense. Nature herself has an account with us, and we are concerned now with her way of payment. In her transactions she allows compound interest, and also, at times, exacts it. She is, we shall see, the most generous of dealers, but has also a stern way with defaulters. Let us invest with her in the right way, and she pays royally. A hundred pounds invested for a century at 5 per cent. will, the ready reckoner assures you, amount to thousands. But Nature is more generous than that. Her returns in this line are beyond the computings of arithmetic. But let us overdraw our account with her and her bill, with compound interest charges, is a formidable one. We may now note, in one or two directions, how the account works out.

We begin life by making investments. As youngsters our capital consists of our faculties, our time, our energy. We put these first into the business of

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education. We learn our letters, and other things. We do it often unwillingly, for we are not our own masters. We had much rather—young spendthrifts that we are—expend these resources on our toys, our games, the things that amuse us. Under hard compulsion we, however, pay in our deposits. We put our time, our little brain, into that hideous alphabet, and by-and-by have learned to read. We forget how long the acquirement took us. It is at most a tiny fraction of a long life, but have we ever tried to calculate what the return has been? We are drawing it every day. Here, at your breakfast table, is your newspaper. There is no effort in reading it; all is pure pleasure. Everything that is going on in the world is here, to come into your mind as easily as the air into your lungs. Around you are your bookshelves; the finest minds of all the ages ready to converse with you, to give you of their best. All this as the result of our learning to read. A considerable return, is it not, for that early investment? Not all the gold of Klondyke, nor the silver of Colorado, could so have enriched us. The point here is that the investments should be made early; it is thus the interest accumulates. Put a lad to music. Let the musical notation come to him as part of his alphabet. Let his fingers, while they are supple, learn the touch of keys or strings. In the after years he has a new sense, a new perception of beauty, a companion, a resource of all his leisure. The time-capital here expended goes on paying, paying an ever larger dividend. The German knows this secret better than we do. He invests more largely

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in his first years, and is richer accordingly for the rest of his life.

Nature, indeed, is a marvellous paymaster. Let one of her children strike a new idea, hit on a fresh discovery—say the driving power of steam or the secret of electricity—and it becomes a possession for all time. There is no expiration of copyright, no falling in of the lease. A single thought like that of Bessemer's chief invention adds as much to England's productive power as the labour of a hundred thousand men. And the results are always cumulative. Our creditor, instead of calling in her largess, leaves it as the means of further advances. The human resources grow at an ever-increasing ratio. The wealth of the United States between the two census years of 1880 and 1890 increased beyond the combined previous accumulations since the landing of Columbus. Dr. Russel Wallace computes that the nineteenth century gave a total of twenty-five great gains to human knowledge and power, to only fifteen in all the preceding ages. "To get," he adds, "any adequate comparison with the nineteenth century, we must take, not any preceding century or group of centuries, but rather the whole preceding epoch of human history." And the twentieth century in its advances, in its organic changes in society, is likely to surpass the nineteenth as much as that surpassed the ages behind it. There seems absolutely no limit to the possibilities of the human future.

Nature never fails in her payments ; but she does not, in these transactions, go by rule of thumb. The wages are there for good work, but they are not

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handed over always at the end of the week. Her law here goes deeper than ours, and works out often in unexpected ways. Observe, for instance, the flowering of a great genius. The qualities exhibited in these splendid human outbursts have been working underground, towards this consummation, through several generations. They have a pedigree. Trace the musical prodigies, the Beethovens, the Mendelssohns, the Bachs, the Mozarts, the Rossinis, and you will find them sprung of families where music has been a cultivation in humble, comparatively unknown souls, who worked towards something that was not to appear in themselves, but in another. The history of the spiritual chieftains tells the same story. Wesley, Luther, Bernard, St. Louis, Augustine—behind all of them you find a pious, God-fearing ancestry; men and women whose own spiritual struggle and victory won no name for themselves, but were accumulating a store of inner force that was to exhibit itself in these greater lives. They had their own pay, these humble progenitors—all that was good for them to receive; but there was a surplus held over, to be used in its time.

This principle works not only along a line of ancestry, but in our separate lives. We get our compound interest for everything, in the way of honest endeavour, that we lay out. Nature has here a secret bounty fund, out of which she furnishes surprise gifts to her faithful workers. We toil along our several lines of industry, at first with prentice hands, each day reaching our day's result—by no means a large one. Then comes a point when we



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recognise a new faculty dawning in us, a touch that yesterday was beyond us. The neophyte has become an expert, the botcher an artist. The thinker who is accustomed to encounter difficult themes has an almost daily experience in this kind. For a while, in the region where his mind is working, all seems confused, incoherent; he sees no way through the tangle. He puts the theme aside, perhaps sleeps on it. Meanwhile something behind his consciousness has been toiling for him. He wakes to find the clouds all lifted from the scene; the road is clear and there is sunlight on the prospect. What happens here to the individual is happening to the race. At the back of our own endeavours are the vast unseen forces of the universe, waiting to manifest themselves through us, making us the trustees of their hoarded capital, using us as the instruments through which they press themselves into the human service. We are in partnership with all the wealth of the worlds invisible.

There is one direction in which life's compound interest is paid with a specially lavish hand, and that is in the region of self-denial, of sacrifice, of suffering endured for others. The problem of the world's pains and sorrows is, on many of its sides, an unsolved one. But there are facts connected with it that help us to understand. Suffering, as we all know, is hard to endure, but even on this visible plane its rewards are magnificent. We pass through some desperate stress; a five minutes' deadly peril on the mountains, a business crisis that had nearly wrecked us. It passes, and is over. No, not over. The thought

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of it remains for all the years after, as a source of joyous, vivid remembrance, a memory which rewards us a thousandfold for what we then experienced. In our terrors and our dangers we are bountifully dealt with. In deeper things the same rule holds. Jesus faces His Cross ; goes through those days of humiliation and anguish. It is nigh two thousand years ago ; but the forces then let loose—forces of love and life—have been flowing since through all those ages ; flow to-day more strongly and deeply than when they broke first from Calvary's height. What happened in that foremost soul has been happening in all brother souls. Most true is that word of Bishop Westcott : " A life of calculated self-sacrifice becomes a spring of immeasurable power." The force of suffering love is mightier than that which urges the worlds in their courses.

If we would expect life's best returns we must invest our capital in the right direction. That brings us to one of the burning questions of to-day. What is now pressing the conscience of thoughtful men is the enormous luxury of the rich compared with the appalling poverty of the poor. The luxury has its defenders. It is argued that a lavish expenditure puts money in circulation, and helps numbers of people to employment. You give a "freak dinner" or a fancy ball ; you sail about in a 3,000-ton yacht, or shoot pheasants over well-stocked preserves ; or you drop your money over the gambling-tables of Monte Carlo. What matters ? The money moves, keeps numbers of people going ; gets into a healthy variety of pockets. Our spendthrift is exalted into a public

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benefactor. It is time people were taught to think on these subjects. Is the man who spends in this way getting any proper return for himself, in the development of his own inner nature ; or in the characters of the sycophants who surround him, of the pampered menials who minister to him, in the gamblers who pocket his losses ? Consider what would be the difference not only to the man himself and his immediate surroundings, but to the whole social condition, if instead of consuming his capital on mere waste he invested it in productive work ; in the building of homes, in the settlement of people on the land, in enterprises whose returns are in the health, well-being and happiness of his fellows !

To selfish expenditures, to reckless animal indulgence, nature, which renders so lavishly on wise investments, has her own rejoinder. She closes her fist more tightly than the hardest usurer of Jewry. She proceeds now by what economists call "the law of diminishing returns." The mere pleasure-lover finds his sources closing with every succeeding year. His vices turn and rend him. He finds, as Mary Cholmondeley puts it, "the red-hot iron of our selfishness with which we brand others becomes in time hot at both ends." Nature, outraged by the defiance of her spiritual law, instead of yielding her compound interest, turns the scale the other way and exacts a compound interest ; duns and prisons her debtors for it till they have paid the uttermost farthing. She pays now in penalties. As Anne of Austria said to Richelieu, "God does not pay at the end of every week, but in the end He pays."

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In truth, it is a wonderful scheme we belong to in this world of ours. There are sides of it stern enough, not safe to ignore. But none but the utterly perverse can fail to perceive its marvellous generosity. An honest investment has such wondrous returns. And all the evidences are that the system does not end here ; that it is part of a larger system, running beyond the bounds of our mortal life, into a sphere where, in the words of an apostle, " the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Our life's venture, by God's grace, gets its compound interest in eternity.

## XV

### WITHIN

WE live in two worlds, that outer one of matter and form which bumps up continually against our senses, which we touch, see, hear and handle; and that inner one at our centre which perceives these things and forms its judgments on them. How the one gets into the other, how the one is related to the other, has been the everlasting puzzle of philosophy, a puzzle we are never likely to solve. Berkeley used the resources of his unsurpassed dialectic in showing the illusiveness of matter; in showing that the one thing we really know is our mental state. You can push that doctrine too far, as is evidenced by the absurdity of the solipsist who argues: "I cannot transcend experience, and experience must be my experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond myself exists." Kant reduced the controversy to its proper limits when, in his analysis of perception, he showed that what comes to us as a knowledge of the outside world is never the raw material of that world—the thing in itself—but a manufactured article, trimmed and shaped by the inherent qualities of our own mind. In this sense we make our world. It is a world constructed largely from within. How far that inner product corresponds to the outer universe it

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is supposed to reflect can only be with us a matter of faith. If we were different beings ; if our senses worked in a different way, would not the world be different for us ? We can only reply, " We are what we are, and the world is what it is to us."

But this rebound of the soul upon its world is a great deal more than a mere metaphysical puzzle. It is the illustration, on the largest scale, of what we owe to the inner spirit. " Not that which cometh into the man, but that which goeth out from the man "—there, as Jesus put it, is our great concern. And behind that—in a way, more than that—there is what happens before the outcoming. The real history of the world, the future of the world, lies not in its battles, sieges, conquests, the whole material of our newspapers, our chronicles, but in what is taking place deep down in the recesses of the human spirit, in the perceptions, cogitations, wrestlings, will-determinings of the foremost minds. All the religions, all the literatures, all the social organisations, all the judgments upon life, can be reduced to one formula ; they are the indications of the size and quality of the world's soul at any given time. Your creeds, your congresses, your governments, are straws in the wind. What really matters in any epoch is the question, Has the soul moved ? Has it gained any fresh step in its development ? That is the event which will decide all other events.

All things change when we change. Even the past, which we think of as beyond the reach of mutation, safe even, as Horace puts it, from the immortal Gods, takes on different colours with every

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inch of our growth. It yields us according to what we bring to it. What is the Forum or the Vatican to the modern tripper? How different the story they yield to him compared with that they offer a Goethe, a Villari! The present writer, contemplating Salamis from the Ægean, was accosted by one of the ship's crew. The hardy seaman could not understand the fuss people made of these bits of islands, of these tumble-down ruins. His conversation with them was of the briefest. They had nothing to say to him. No. You may go to the ocean, and if you have only a tin cup in your hand, you will carry away only a cupful of it. And if in this way we make the past, we in like manner make the present; the beauty of our world, is it anywhere but in our eyes that see it?

For oh, is it you, is it you,  
Moonlight and shadow and lake,  
And mountains that fill us with joy,  
Or the poet who sings you so well?

Nature is nothing; her charm  
Lies in our eyes who can paint,  
Lies in our hearts which can feel.

A tree cannot be a tree, it seems, or a mountain a mountain without us. And the more of us we bring to them the more there is of them.

And if it is by the soul's inner movement, its height of growth, that we appreciate nature, it is in the same way we appreciate our fellow-men. It is only when we think ourselves into their interior, stand with them, as it were, at their lonely centre, that we get the beginnings of a true relation. All the enmities, all the jealousies, the base joys of victory over the



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adversary, come from the outside view. If we could feel a pang of his anguish, should we ever intentionally wound our fellow? We see here the use of imagination in morals. Its development in these later times is becoming one of the great spiritual renovators. It was the absence of it which made possible the cruelties, the barbarisms of earlier days. It never occurred to the mediæval baron, feasting in his hall, while his victim languished in a dungeon fifty feet beneath, to perform that mental feat. Could he have put himself inside the man, have thought his thought for him, there had been an end of his torturing.

It is this new imaginative sympathy which, perhaps more than any other force, is recreating our world. It is so internationally. We are studying not only our own, but other people's literatures, and the result is always a leap of sympathy. To learn a foreign language, and through it to get to the people's heart behind, is to win to yourself a new fellowship. Everywhere the human heart, when you get to it, is so moving, so homelike. It beats to the same tune as yours. Here are all the emotions, the aspirations, that have stirred your own soul. How can you hate these Germans, these French, these Russians, these Irish, when you have learned their history, listened to the voice of their soul? And as with nations, so with groups and classes. To-day we see society sundered by widest chasms of thinking, and that on the deepest subjects. Well, we shall never understand our opponent till we let him speak for himself. You learn nothing about him by putting his adversary into the box. Half our confusions, our

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religious animosities, are from reading about people instead of reading *them*. No system explains itself except from within. If you would know Catholicism you must read the Catholics. If you want to know Cardinal Manning or Tom Paine you must get to their standpoint, and see, from that inmost centre, how the world shaped itself to them. When we do that the wonderful, the inevitable thing happens. These figures, so alien, so remote, become to us human, become lovable. We love because at last we understand. Along this line we shall get some vast reconciliations in the time to come.

In our religious belief and life the determining factor is always the inner factor. You repeat the same creed to a thousand people. They all say "Amen" to it; but is it the same to them? They have assented to a thousand different creeds; different with all the varieties of their separate upbringing, of their knowledge of the words used, of the mental and moral predispositions they bring to them. The outside creed, the outside ceremony, remain the same, but the inner growth of the soul alters perpetually our relation. To the same Bible come a Wesley and a Marat. They are both constant readers of the Bible. But the English divine brings to it a heart yearning with compassion for his fellows, and takes from it a message of salvation to every creature; of the French revolutionist we read: "There was Marat, with the Bible always before him, picking out texts which justified his murders."

And we shall never get on in our interpretation of doctrine, in our prognostic of the future of religion,

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till we recognise that this inner movement is a Divine movement, the personal, the eternal revelation. It is this Divine consciousness in us, ever developing, ever coming to clearer affirmations, which is steadily ridding us of earlier barbaric conceptions of God and man. The Divine in us, which is teaching us the omnipotence of goodness, the limitlessness of love, which puts us alongside, inside, of our fellow-man, one with his innermost feeling and need, makes it impossible for us to conceive of God as other, as less than that. And so away go all doctrines which are contrary to this ; all doctrines which imply that God can inflict torture for the sake of torture ; can please Himself with another's sufferings. If God is in man, eternal punishment would be the eternal punishment of Himself ; He would be Himself the eternal sufferer in His own hell !

While the soul, in its inner growth, arrives, in these directions, at what seems denial, the chief result is in great affirmations. We hear to-day of Christianity being "at the cross-roads." The New Testament is being torn in pieces at the hands of a remorseless criticism. The four Gospels are under the microscope. Upon every sentence, every word, is being brought to bear the fiercest light that ever played on human handiwork. In this light we are asked to consider, not only the limitations of the Gospel writers, but the limitations of Him whose words and deeds they record. Taken by itself it is a disturbing study. Had we no other apparatus to fall back upon we should be left in a desperate confusion. The French Loisy, the German Weiss, Pfleiderer, Schweitzer, in

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their "quest of the historical Jesus," leave us so precious little of Jesus as the result ! But is that all we really have ? The heart knows better. Jesus, whatever the critics make of Him, remains for ever the Creator of the Christian consciousness. He remains the Creator of the soul of to-day. From the Cross, however interpreted, has streamed out a force of love, of spiritual power, which has been the life of the later world. No criticism can ever touch the inner experiences of Paul, of Peter, of Augustine, of Bernard, of Wesley, of Livingstone ; of the myriad unknown ones who in all the ages have by faith overcome the world, have tasted the rapture of the spiritual life. With Jesus came a creation of inner values which no destructive dynamite can blow away. Love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, faith—here is an aliment on which souls have thriven as never before. Here are riches lodged in the world's heart, safe from assault, where no moth or rust can corrupt, where no thieves can break through and steal.

Thus the verdict concerning Christ becomes an inner verdict. The supreme question is not one of theological speculation. It is not of the size of Christ in the cosmos ; it is of His size in you and me. It is how far His sacrifice is reproduced in our sacrifice ; how far the love which went to uttermost death finds reflection in our love ; how far the transformation of values which He brought in has become a transformation in us—making our courage that which shines, not in bloody fields, but in battles against all the evils that bar men from their blessedness ; our skill, our faculty, not a power for self-aggrandisement, but an

## Within

instrument of help to our brother, which brings for us eternity into time and crams our life with heaven.

The history of the world, we repeat, is the history of its inner states. "Observe," says Emerson, "how every truth and every error, each a thought of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, language, ceremonies, newspapers!" No outward thing, however old, venerable, deeply rooted, can stand the shock of a thought, provided the thought be a true one. A despot may count himself secure in his regiments, his artilleries, his squadrons of horse. But let there come beneath those helmets a new idea, the sense of their right as against this man's right, and his power is at an end. As we think of the tyrannies that still oppress the world there come to mind Swinburne's passionate lines:

Open thy soul to see,  
Slave, and thy feet are free;  
Thy bonds and thy beliefs are one in kind,  
And of thy fears thine irons wrought  
Hang weights upon thee fashioned  
Out of thine own thought.

A new movement, deep down in the soul of the millions, a single new thought there—the thought which is coming—and without trampings or trumpetings all the walls of the world's despot Jerichos will lie prone upon the ground.

Our whole success or failure in life is an affair of what is going on within us. The outside event is, after all, so little of it outside. It takes its shape, colour, quality, its power of blessing or cursing, from the shape, colour and quality of the soul in us that meets it. What it is, first and last, is a question of

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what *you* are. Present a £1,000 banknote to your dog, and it would perhaps swallow it and cough its disgust. The Bodleian library is to a scholar the Bodleian. What would it be to an Esquimaux? The cross of the blaspheming thief was, we suppose, of the same wood as that on which Christ hung. The nails were of the same penetrating sharpness. But what a different story they told! It was the difference, incalculable—between this soul and its neighbour. What inwardness are you to-day offering to the assault of the world's outwardness? To this scene which surrounds you how much faith, how much prayer, how much love and courage are you bringing? Here, in your inner training, in your central thought, is the secret of victory. We come back to the words of the *Imitatio*: "He to whom all things are one, and who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, can be steadfast in heart and remain peaceable in God."

## XVI

### BEHIND

“FORGETTING those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before” has been the text of innumerable sermons. An inspiring text it is, the clarion note of progress. A much-needed note in our own day, when such multitudes of people, in politics, in theology, in social matters, are bent on reversing the Apostolic monition, being occupied in forgetting the things before and reaching forth to those which are behind. There are numbers of men—and very noble souls among them—who are by temperament and mental habit invincible conservatives. They are with Charles Lamb in his saying, “I cannot make these present times present to me.” They are so obsessed by the achievements of the past, so full of the great spirits who have lived there, that nothing in their own day satisfies them, and the future is a menacing uncertainty. And it is not only the quiet, contemplative souls that have felt this: their feeling has been shared by great reformers, knocked down, as it seems, by the recoil of their own performances. Luther in his later years was full of foreboding. “It is a mad world,” said he, “and I pray that God may soon end it.” Calvin, in one of his last addresses, declared that the outlook was so bad that unless God



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specially interposed he saw nothing but ruin in the future. The men who have done the greatest things are often the worst judges of them. When their own day of strength is over and they see the new time being shaped by other hands than theirs, they think the world that has slipped from their grasp to be on the down grade. They are under the temptation to which the strongest succumb, to consider their own work to be God's work, while their neighbour's is that of the devil. Against all this the apostle's word is a magnificent vindication of the Divine order, and a call to us to believe in it. What is to come is, despite all contrary appearance, a furthering, and not a reversal, of what has gone, a harvesting of all its sowing, a developing of all its good.

But this great teaching is not to be misunderstood by us. The things behind, though not to be rested in, have yet a significance which is worthy of all our study. We shall never do much in the future if we neglect the past. What we propose here is to note the way in which, at all points, the future is played into by the past, how the one is the birth of the other's gestation. As we survey the events and the characters that have made history we see how the past has worked, sometimes negatively and sometimes positively, but always effectively. There are many careers that have begun without a quotable past. But in these cases the absence of anything behind has been to our man what the gaping void is to the climber on the side of the precipice. The emptiness of that chasm behind is the incitement that calls on his strength and nerve for their best efforts. It is the reminder that everything

## Behind

depends on his personal skill and courage. We see that in all departments. Goethe, in his old age, speaking of his literary work, said that the dearth of great German literature when he began was the making of him. "Had I been born an Englishman and begun with such magnificent things as Shakespeare's works before me, they would have overpowered me, and I should not have known what to do." It is a good thing sometimes to have no ancestors. "Ancestors," said one of Napoleon's marshals, who had sprung from the people, "but I am the ancestor." The genius of a Cromwell, of a Napoleon, of a Grant, were, depend on it, mightily stimulated by the fact that there was nothing behind them, that everything depended on themselves, that no glamour came to their name from any that had gone before. And yet, as we ponder those names, how pregnant in their career become the things behind, not only in this negative sense, but also in a positive one! They had no great ancestry. All the same, it was the background that made them. What position had Oliver Cromwell won if there had been no English revolution? Would Napoleon have found a career if there had been no French Revolution and no Terror? Would Grant, who had long before left the American army, and was drudging on as a not too prosperous tradesman and farmer, have ever shown his genius had there been no Civil War?

Yet, in these very careers we see how complicated, how many-sided is the philosophy of the things behind. These men began with nothing behind in their personalities, but with everything behind in their circum-

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stances. Then, their early nothingness helps their genius, until by their deeds they create a new hinterland, a past of their own, which becomes a prodigious instrument of power. Cromwell after Marston Moor, Napoleon after the Italian campaign, Grant after Vicksburg, had created in their soldiery a faith in their commanders which made them invincible, because they always were sure of victory. What a study it is, a study in the boundless human capability, to see these men, time after time, pitting themselves against the impossible, and overcoming it! To see Grant before Vicksburg, the seemingly impregnable fortress of the Mississippi, in the horrible winter of '62, the country under water, his troops drenched by incessant rains, with the North profoundly discouraged, despairing of its cause—to see him, hampered by the vacillating orders of his superiors, going contrary to the advice of his ablest counsellors, who told him that to cut himself off from his base as he had done was simply ruin, yet holding on, taking all the frightful risks, believing that to win this victory was the only way of saving the Union, and finally winning it—is to watch a man creating a past for himself which made all the rest easy. It was a past that fought for him in the hearts of every one of his soldiers, making them ready, with him in front, to go anywhere and do anything. In these careers we observe how things behind, of the most diverse order, positive and negative, worked towards the making of them. But with them, as with ourselves, the something behind would have been of no avail had it not been taken hold of, and used, by the something within.

## Behind

Let us pursue this theme on another track. We spoke a moment ago of Goethe's appreciation of Shakespeare. Have we ever pondered seriously the significance of that career? Here was a man with absolutely nothing behind him, so far as we can perceive, in the way of mental ancestry. He is the son of an honest glover of Stratford, his mother the daughter of a Warwickshire yeoman, a good housewife, we may believe, but who probably could not sign her name. And it is the mind thus fathered and mothered which produced the greatest literature the world has seen; the mind which gave us Hamlet, and Lear, and Macbeth, which wove the wonder realm of *The Tempest* and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which in *As You Like It* put the deepest philosophy of life into a simple pastoral; which in comedy, in history, tragedy, sounded the human mind and heart in all their heights and depths; which, in a rude age, created woman in her loftiest and loveliest idealisation; whose works, in the view of this same Goethe, himself of the first rank as creator and critic, "seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius descending amongst men, to make them acquainted with themselves."

Is not this, when you come to think of it, a miracle of birth, as great really as any you have heard of? Where is the cause to produce such an effect? There is none that is visible to us. We have, by the sheer logic of the situation, to fall back on the transcendental. The human ancestry, which no one doubts—for there have been no birth-legends of Shakespeare—is not enough for us. We can only see here, in one sphere

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of things, the Infinite expressing some of itself in a human life; a soul's birth, whose antecedent is beyond our ken. And when—to lift this line of thought to its loftiest height—we muse on that other Birth, the Birth with which Christianity began, do we not find here some help in the mystery? In speaking of it as transcendent and miraculous, as we do, is there any need for us to define the *modus operandi* of the miracle? Whatever we make of the historical puzzles which surround the account of it, is it not enough to say that the human element in the Birth was not enough; that the thing behind it was naught less than the Infinite, showing itself here to man in its highest and most authoritative form?

A study of the things behind, from whatever point we start out, may, we see, lead us to the weightiest conclusions. But we need to be wary in our search. The nineteenth century, in its later period, offered a striking illustration of the mistakes that may be made in a quest of this kind. Our scientists, in that epoch, stirred a prodigious dust in the theological world by what seemed unhallowed investigations into man's hinterland, into the question of human origins. We remember the storm that broke over the "Origin of Species," "The Descent of Man," "Man's Place in Nature," and similar works. When in these books man was assigned his position as a development of the anthropoid apes, and when, as Haeckel afterwards affirmed, his mind could be traced back to the elective affinities of atoms, it seemed to multitudes as though the doom of religion was sealed. Man was a second time expelled from Eden; this time by the scientists.

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He was dragged down by the things behind him, by the pull of his poor relations ! We look to-day with an amused curiosity upon these contests. The scientists and theologians were so industriously engaged in befogging each other ! At last it has dawned upon both sides that this question of origins, of the things behind man's humanity, is quite irrelevant as a religious issue. They have realised that, as Aristotle taught some ages ago, the nature and meaning of things are to be studied not so much in their beginnings as in their development, their actuality, and their reach towards the future. How a thing has become is a minor point as compared with what it is. You cannot explain an oak from an acorn, though it begins there ; and you cannot explain man from an amœba, though you may trace back his filiation to it. All this is an affair of process, not of being. When Genesis declares that man was made in the image of God, and that he came from the dust, it has combined in a sentence all the points of the controversy. Whether the creation out of dust to God's image was the affair of a moment, or was carried on through measureless æons of development, does that make any difference to the result ? Evolution, far from lowering man's spiritual dignity, only increases the wonder of it. The materialist, in studying the things behind him, made the mistake of not going far enough. For the inquirer, in the backward research, cannot stop at the amœba, at the protoplasm, at the molecule. He has to go back to the mind, the purpose, that, through these agents, brought into being the heart and soul we find within us. Here we have no need to forget the

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things that are behind. We may give them all the attention that science claims for them, for, properly considered, they are only an argument for pressing on with renewed hope and faith to the things that are before.

These are high matters ; but our theme has room in it for more intimate and personal considerations. The things behind us are perpetually playing into our present word and deed and assessing their value. When, for instance, we hear a religious or theologic testimony we instinctively look to what is back of it. A plea for orthodoxy by an ecclesiastical official, unless there is a very marked personality inside the official, will not, as a rule, greatly stir the world. When it is made, say, by a Romanes, who, starting in orthodoxy, is driven by his scientific instinct back into negation, into atheism ; and then, later, finding himself " miserable without God," begins, from the " far country " into which he has wandered, slowly and painfully to retrace his steps, until, carrying with him all his scientific knowledge, he reaches once more the standpoint of faith, and with exultant joy proclaims his hard-won acquisition, we feel all the weight of that testimony. The religious edicts of Russian Archimandrites, backed by the whole body of Greek Church officialdom, do not count for much with European rationalism. But when a world-worn Tolstoy, after tasting life in all its forms, at the summit of literary culture, having gone through every phase of scepticism and denial, comes back to the Gospel as for him the one solution to the riddle of existence, the world is compelled to listen. There is a lesson here which the



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clergy of every denomination ought to remember, and too often forget. Their position and title are a heavy handicap. They take off an enormous discount from their utterances. And they will fail utterly as exponents of the faith, unless by a vigorous and intense personality they reverse the handicap conditions, and make themselves felt in the community, not as officials, but as living men.

Our past will out. "What you are," says Emerson in one of his terrible sentences, "what you are stands over you and speaks so loud that I cannot hear a word you say." And it is our past that has made us what we are. When a man of repute goes down in some moral catastrophe the downfall seems sudden to the public, but it is not sudden to the fact. Underneath there has been going on a long process of sapping and mining, until the will has lost all power of resistance, and so against the new temptation has no defence to offer. To will strongly for the true and the good, against all contrary pressures, is not only necessary for to-day's warfare. It is only thus that we can raise embankments against the storms and floods of the future. There is no standing still in this warfare. It is only by an incessant striving to be better that we continue to be good. To give way to-day is to leave an enemy in our rear, the worst fault, as every strategist knows, that a general can commit.

The things behind us are for the sake of the things in front. Do we not see something prophetic in this infinity of preparation? What human imagination would have dared to predict that out of the original chaos could come such a world as we see; that the

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first germ of animate life would develop into the intellect and heart inside us? And if all that is behind, what is there before? Are we not to hope something out of such a record? To the apostle the past, with all its wonder, was as nothing to the future. Let us share that certitude. It is well founded. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Now we have the sense and feeling of God deep in our hearts. It is a germ, but one, be sure, that will have full fruition. All science, all history, all religion bid us stretch on to the things that are before.

Grow old along with me,  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made;  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith, A whole I planned,  
Youth knows but half; trust God; see all,  
Nor be afraid.

## XVII

### PROVIDENCE

"UNLESS the hairs of your head are all numbered there is no God." The words are George Macdonald's, and they put the challenge to faith in its clearest and boldest form. We all want to believe that our hairs are numbered; that we are the objects of a special loving care. We feel with Michelet: "Let the sentiment of the loving cause disappear, and it is over with me. If I have no longer the happiness of feeling this world to be loved, of feeling myself to be loved, I can no longer live. Hide me in the tomb." But the wish, we are told, is not evidence. Is not the evidence rather the other way? Our age has become penetrated with a sense of the utter indifference of nature to our personal fortunes. "The heavens above make no disclosure; the earth keeps up its terrible composure." It is said the earthquake of Lisbon made multitudes of people atheists. Do we wonder? The world order is no respecter of persons. In a shipwreck the sea will drown the saint as composedly as the escaped murderer. We rebel against a system of things which has permitted ages of slavery, of brutal penal laws; which allows a civilisation where, at our own doors, people are herded in homes

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of one room, where children die for want of food, where men kill themselves because life is too much for them. Why, it is asked, if God is omnipotent and loving, do men and women drag themselves about in weakness and disease, when He could so easily have made them strong and healthy? Could not the power which made the everlasting mountains, which gave the sea its resistless might, have put some of this wasted energy into our suffering frames? That would have made all the difference! The present writer's correspondence is full of this questioning. It takes sometimes curious forms. Says one inquirer: "If I am robbed of money, you may say perhaps that the loss is meant for my moral discipline. But where does God's will come in on the side of the robber? Is *he* carrying out God's will? Again, when a child is born as the result of a man and woman's sin, is the child's soul, brought this way into existence, an affair of God's will? Or is it a soul without God?" Truly, if faith is to exist at all, it will be as a hardy plant. It has to weather some rude shocks, some baffling queries.

And yet it does exist. That is the first thing to be said. It exists and has existed in all ages of the world. Lactantius, the early Christian apologist, was not far out in his bold statement that belief in Providence was the common property of all religions, and was firmly established before all revelation. And the significance of this fact is not diminished by the circumstance that the reasons for this faith were often so grotesque and, to our mind, so ludicrous. An instinct may not the less be a true instinct for the

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false accounts of it given by its possessors. A man may walk long before he can find a proper statement of the physiology of movement.

In Christendom for long ages the idea of a special Providence was sustained by accounts of miraculous occurrences. The sign of God's care over human lives was in His surpassing or contradicting the known laws of nature. The fifty odd volumes of the Bollandist collection of the "Acta Sanctorum" are stuffed with wonders of this sort. As we read them we are tempted to exclaim, with Meredith, in his "Shaving of Shagpat":

Oh, world diseased! Oh, race empirical,  
Where fools are the fathers of every miracle!

The world's majestic order was not good enough for these enthusiasts. To demonstrate God's power in life they must make Him a law-breaker. Not less singular is the way in which, in Church annals, a special Providence is seen in the triumph of one's own party or faction. The sudden death of Arius on his triumphal entry into Constantinople is held by Catholic writers, Newman included, as a divine intervention in the cause of orthodoxy. When Louis XIV. signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by which he expelled the most stable and truly religious element of his subjects, we have his Minister, Michel le Tellier, exclaiming: "My God, I thank Thee that mine eyes have seen the salvation of Thy people!" A successful battle, no matter in what infamous cause it has been won, has invariably been followed by ecclesiastical Te Deums. The faith in Providence as a sort of special relief agent, to be called on at all

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hours of day and night, was perhaps never more naïvely expressed than in the story of an old negro, who during an earthquake at Charleston prayed as follows: "Good Lord, come and help us; oh, come now. And come Yo'self, Lord; 'taint no time for boys!" Our suppliant believed in help at first hand. He had a healthy distrust of intermediaries.

Views of this kind still hold their ground over a very wide area, but to most intelligent people they are no longer satisfactory ones. If there were nothing else we should be left without a doctrine of Providence. We have not mentioned the theory of pluralism, so ingeniously developed by the late Professor James; nor that of dualism—of an Ormuzd and Ahriman, two opposing powers or personalities, of good and evil, that under these and other names, both in Christendom and outside it, have been used to explain the seeming confusion of things in our world. Certainly there is no *a priori* reason against the idea of a clash of wills as possible behind the scenes. Enmities and malignities are a too familiar phenomenon amongst ourselves. They are a part of the spiritual world, as that world exists in the community of human souls; and who shall say why they may not exist in a spiritual world beyond, and yet in touch with our own? The weirdest theory we have met with as explanation of the supposed cosmic disorder is that of the Piedmontese pessimist whom Benjamin Constant encountered, who held that the world was made by a God, but a God who had died! His intentions were excellent, but He passed before His work was finished, and so left everything as confused as we see it! A cheerful view, truly, and which

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may be said to have the merit of originality, but which does not otherwise appeal to us.

It is time, however, we faced the problem for ourselves. In doing so let us come back to our first proposition. The faith in a special Providence exists ; it exists in spite of calamities, of nature's indifference and apparent cruelty, in spite of all adverse theories. Why, we ask, does it exist ? It is there, we answer, and will always be there, because it dwells in a region beyond and above nature. The spirit of man has its own realm. When it turns in upon itself ; when it seeks its centre ; when it speaks to its kin ; it knows instinctively that the highest in itself has a source ; that the goodness within it derives from a higher Goodness ; that its imperfect love represents a perfect love to which it is united. And this spiritual assurance is not displaced by any outward happening. Rather it feeds upon such happenings. Is it not worth considering that faith in special Providence, instead of being killed by calamity, has actually been built on calamity ? It is when the external presses to its hardest that the soul gets its clearest and intensest self-consciousness ; it is then it retreats to its citadel. As to nature's indifference, her cruelty, was she ever more indifferent, more cruel, than when the Man of Nazareth hung upon the cross ? The old Gnostics maintained that Jesus did not suffer ; it was only an appearance. We know better. Not an ounce of nature's penalty was remitted, not a jot or tittle broken of her inevitable law. The slow torture of the agonised body, its weight hung upon the cruel nails, was felt to the full. And yet it was there, in



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the career that ended so, that the mightiest faith the world has known, the faith in God as the Father of Eternal Love, was born. And ever since the times of suffering have been the times of faith. Scotland to-day is an orthodox country. Its comfortable burghers have a very respectable sense of religion. But will anyone say that its religious faith is comparable in its intensity with that of the men of the Moss-hags, who sheltered their starved and storm-beaten bodies in dens and caves from the fury of the oppressor ?

When you talk of the relentless laws of nature, you must talk also of the spirit of man, in its relation to them. An earthquake, you say, shows the indifference of the world-order to our personal fortunes. The present writer had a letter from an English settler in South America, whose house had been thrown down and his prospects ruined by an earthquake. He and his family had spent the night on which he wrote unprotected on the hillside. And he wrote to say that never in his life had he experienced such a sense of the presence of God, and of confidence in Him, as in those dread hours. At such times men have dealings not only with nature's laws but with something beyond them. In our pessimistic speculations our mistake is in constantly looking to the outside and neglecting the inside. It is the men who have fronted privation and danger and death who have least to say about nature's cruelty. They have not found her cruel. Dr. Taylor, the Marian martyr, when he was told he had reached the place where he must suffer, said : " Thank God I am even at home." He did not think

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of death at the stake as a mere cruelty. It is not the desperate situation that promotes pessimism. That is the result rather of luxury and overfeeding. When Whymper, the great climber, was tumbling down a precipice of the Matterhorn, expecting every moment to be his last, he describes his sensations. He felt no pain, and no disquietude; he had rather a sort of amused curiosity as to which bump would finish his business! And many a climber in similar situations—we can count ourselves in the number—can testify to the same feeling.

The faith in a special Providence which is possible to our time, and to all times, is ~~then~~ a faith which resides in the spiritual realm, which springs out of our spiritual instincts and affinities; which works in a sphere that transcends nature, which accepts her laws, even in their hardest expressions, as ministering to its development. We say this in face of all the objections. Let us come to them—to the things we said at the beginning. Why, with a good and omnipotent God, is not our world more perfect; why weakness and disease, when with such powers abroad in the universe there might have been strength and health? Why has a state of society been permitted in which the rich rob the poor; in which the hardest work is done for the worst pittance; in which we have homes of one room? That is to say, supposing God had done everything for us! Would that have been a better condition than the one in which we find ourselves; one in which we are invited to find out things, and to do things for ourselves? A paradise with nothing to do might be a paradise for somebody else

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to admire; it would be no place for an eager soul to find itself in. We are reminded here of the saying of Goethe: "It would have been for Him (God) a poor occupation to compose this heavy world out of simple elements, and to keep it rolling in the sunbeams from year to year, if He had not the plan of founding a nursery for a world of spirits upon this material basis."

B. The whole scheme, indeed, so far as it opens to us, is one whose primal object—for which all else is risked and even sacrificed—is a scheme for the development of human spirits, and that by leaving for man to do all that he can do. He is not to be coddled—to be furnished with crutches when he can use his own muscles and limbs. The school-boy who finds a companion to do all his sums for him may regard his helper as a special providence. But he is not a good providence. Why should man be cured by miracle of his diseases? Let him learn to cure himself. That will give him not only health but the laws of health—so much larger a possession. His difficulties, his miseries—what are they but a perpetual challenge to try again? People are plagued here by droughts, there by deluges. They pray for better weather, and get no answer to their prayers. But is there no answer? Is not heaven's silence here a quiet challenge to man to undertake his weather? We are beginning to conquer the air by flying in it. But is there not another, a larger conquest yet to be attempted? Are we not in sight of a time when man, helpless hitherto under his storms and heats, shall turn the energies of his intellect to these seeming intractable elements and subdue them to his sway? However that may be,

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this, at any rate, becomes increasingly clear to us—that every human weakness, every social disorganisation, every hindrance to our perfecting, lies there before us: not as evidence of heaven's indifference, but as heaven's challenge to our own effort. We are to work out our own salvation, the only salvation that can be of any value to us.

It is on this line of things that we find the answer to questions such as those in the correspondence we mentioned in the beginning. Where is the special Providence, the will of God, in the action of the robber who despoils us, in the bringing into the world of an illegitimate child as the result of lust? That is no new question. We may equally think, "Where was the will of God in the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus, or the soldiers who buffeted and crucified Him?" And it is answered in the same way. Be sure there was a will—the will that put a soul of good into things evil; the will that left man free to do his worst as well as his best; to find himself by pursuing wrong roads to the very end and discovering what was to be met with there. The human freedom, with all the risk of using it wrongly, is better than no freedom. The soul can grow under no other conditions. Man must put out to sea, even with the chance of wreckage, for he will never become a sailor by remaining in port. And our faith goes so far as to believe that in this human voyage even his wreckage will not ruin him. For man's worst has its limitations and contains in itself some subtle seed of recovery. As that excellent Christian Father, Methodius, has it, "For I say that man was made, not for destruction, but for better

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things." The scheme we are under is a moral one : a scheme under which the thief will pay for his thievery and the lustful man for his lawlessness of passion. But it is one also which recognises in the criminal more than his criminality. If he is under a law which exacts its penalty, he is under a grace which is higher than law, which uses law as the instrument of its purpose of blessing.

Yes, the hairs of our head are all numbered. Whenever we pray we affirm that. And we can match this affirmation, in our being's highest act, against all the materialisms and all the devil's advocacies, from whatever quarter they come. For the soul here is sure of itself. It moves here in a sphere the world cannot enter, still less conquer. *Quis separabit?* In face of life's sternest tragedies, of its utmost extremities, it joins in the Apostle's triumphant hymn of faith, knowing with him that neither life nor death, things present nor things to come, can shut it off from the Infinite Love.

## XVIII

### PAUSES

HAVE we ever considered—in music and other things—the significance of the pause? In an orchestral performance there is a moment when the sound ceases. The musicians are bending over their instruments; the conductor is beating time with his baton, but no note emerges. What is this silence? It is not an interruption. It is a part of the music. It is as eloquent, as necessary as any preceding or following crash of harmony. It is not the end; it is full of the announcement of something to follow. It is a passivity which has all the activities, latent, buried in it; a passivity which enhances the value of these activities; which is needed for their full expression. You note the same thing in public oratory. There was a preacher of a generation ago who was famous for his pauses. They stirred all the expectancy of his auditors, who knew that something good was coming. He had his imitators, often, alas! with disastrous results. They forgot that the value of their pause lay entirely in what preceded and what was to come after it!

But there is more in the pause than these instances offer. It is, we perceive, an element in all life. It is a feature of our physical being. Our body conforms

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to it in our nightly sleep. The heart, in its constant systole-diastole, has its moment of rest. In some hypersensitive natures the vitality seems to have a kind of wave or tidal movement. There are months, perhaps years, of growing activity, till high-water mark is reached. Then comes a stay, a recession, an ebb of force, till everything almost is at standstill, and the worker must rest, till the flow begins again.

The world at large is full of the doctrine of pause. Nature depends upon it for some of her greatest effects. One might speak here of her dramatic instinct. How incomparable is her *mise en scène* of a thunderstorm! And amid all the array of impressive effects there the greatest surely is the pause which precedes it. What is to compare with that sudden hush; when every bird is silent, when not a breath stirs the air; when every mortal of us, and every beast in the forest, knows that this weird stillness is but the prelude to the crash which by and by will shake heaven and earth!

But the thunderstorm is an incident. The cosmos, viewed as a whole, gives us the pause on a vaster scale. There may be some glimpse of a truth in that idea of the Eastern thinkers of what they call "the sleep of Brahma," in which they represent the whole of the visible universe as a transitory phenomenon, which appears, runs its course, and disappears to come forth again, after an age-long slumber, into a new and higher manifestation. It is, to say the least, a suggestive commentary on this, that modern science begins to speak of the evolution of matter as a progress from the original ether into movement,



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solidity and form, and its return, by exhaustion, back to its original starting-point. In electricity we see an intermediate state between the two—electricity, which we create out of matter, but which is destitute of matter's most characteristic element, that of gravitation. Science is here on the edge of immense truths, which it is for the future to explore. What is thus presented to us is the idea of cosmic pauses, of æonic slumbers, where the visible is reduced to nothingness—but a nothingness which contains the all.

But these illustrations, alike in the little and the infinitely great, interesting as they are in themselves, derive their real value from what they have to tell us as to the meaning of the pause. Wherever we encounter it we find it an intermediate between a before and an after. It derives its whole significance from these two things. It is not an emptiness, but is full of them both. It is a passivity; but what is passivity? The reverse surely of what is usually attributed to it. It is the inactive only in name. We had better call it a concealment, a working under the surface of those unseen forces which are the mightiest of all. We have only to look through life, as revealed in history and our personal experience, to see the confirmation of this.

That field, as a whole, is far too vast for us to attempt here to explore. Let us concentrate on one portion of it, that of religion, and Christianity as to us its best-known expression. We have here, amongst other things, a doctrine of the pause, which in the present difficult time is worth all our study. Christianity begins with the personal career of Jesus;

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His life and teaching; and His death. We dismiss the present attempt to take that career out of history as too ludicrous for serious consideration. Tacitus and Suetonius had the worst possible opinion of Christianity, but they had no doubt as to the historicity of Jesus.

Let us now take that death of Christ on the cross, to which Tacitus so contemptuously refers. It is the end of the ministry, of the active career. Jesus is on the cross, unable to save Himself, to do anything but suffer. He is in the hands of His enemies, who have their entire way with Him. The fellowship he has organised is broken up; His followers have fled. The whole mission is at an end. Renan speaks of that last sigh on the cross as the close of the career. And yet it is the simple fact that in this dread pause in Christ's work, in this passivity of mere suffering, in this seeming pitiful end of the active ministry, lay concealed the forces which created the Church, and have moulded the after-life of the world. View it apart from all theology, from every shred of Church dogma, but simply as a question of historic fact, and you find in the capture, the suffering and death of Jesus, and the breaking up of His community, a pause which, viewed in the light of what followed, contained in itself the most stupendous ethical and spiritual powers that have ever been exhibited in human experience. Was ever a death so alive? Was ever a passivity so full of energy? Was not Jesus, as Augustine so finely says, "*Victor quia victima*," victor because victim? Here at least is a doctrine of the cross that no criticism can weaken, one which

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theology has largely overlooked. It is one we may well study, the doctrine that the mightiest destinies of man are wrought precisely when he himself is at standstill. When he, as it seems, is doing nothing, it is precisely then that the Something outside him takes a hand and does all.

Christianity, founded in this marvellous way, has had a varied history. What we have here to notice in it is that, through it all, we find this feature of the pause. There are times when its forces, in the forms in which they have hitherto appeared, seem to have exhausted themselves. Take, for instance, the eve of the Reformation. The Christian religion, as a spiritual force, appeared to have died out. The Church itself, at the very centre of it, was essentially pagan. Says Vettori, the Florentine Ambassador at the Court of Leo X. : "The Pontiffs, while preserving the title of Vicars of Christ, have founded a new religion which is Christian only in name. For Christ preached poverty, while the Popes desire wealth ; He prescribed humility, and they are the followers of vain glory ; He prescribed obedience, and they wish to command all the world." Says his contemporary Machiavelli : "How much religion is corrupted is proved by this, that the peoples nearest to Rome are those having least faith in it." And Villari, writing of that brilliant but dissolute period, observes : "Most certainly the conspirators, patriots, politicians, and captains of the Italy of the Renaissance drew their inspiration from Brutus, Cæsar, Lycurgus, Solon, or Epaminondas, but never from the Gospel." Who, looking at that period, not in Italy only, but throughout

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Europe, would have supposed that the hour was already striking which was to usher in the greatest revival of apostolic religion the world had seen since the first century; a revival, let us well remember, which was not confined to the new Protestantism, but entirely changed and remoralised the Roman Church itself!

History has other illustrations, but let that suffice. What is the lesson of all this? We adduce it because it is one which our day seems especially to need. For ours is, in the religious sense, a time of pause. Organised Christianity shows everywhere signs of decadence. The European religious statistics give everywhere the same note. In Germany, France, Italy, England, the story is of growing revolt from the established forms. Is this summary of Höffding's beyond the facts? "Religion was once the pillar of fire which went before the human race in its great march through history, showing it the way. Now it is fast assuming the rôle of the ambulance which follows in the rear, and picks up the exhausted and wounded."

These are signs which may well affright the timid. But if our study of the world-movement has in it any approach to accuracy, we shall find here no cause for dismay. For that movement is an ordered one, one of which we may say *nulla vestigia retrorsum*. Its pauses are part of the programme. Like those in music, they are full of the new beginning. The twentieth century will prove, as previous centuries have done, that the seemingly passive periods are those where unseen forces, working far down beneath

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the surface, are shaping new manifestations ; manifestations which, in all that concerns the real interests of the soul, will far surpass the old. The pause in the music is to give emphasis to the something higher that is coming. The new religious synthesis will have its own forms. There will be vast readjustments ; revaluations in spiritual things, where much that is now up will go down, and much that is down will go up. Away with our fears for the religious future ! The movement is always upward. Do we imagine that our present seeming confusions are a real confusion ? Can we think that the Power which out of an egg-yolk shapes the plumaged bird ; which, from an unformed chaos has brought forth an orderly world, is at fault here ? As if we, in our councils and conferences, were the arbiters of the future ! It is precisely when we are without a scheme, that the real scheme, which is not ours, but has our best interests included in it, moves to its next step.

And this, which is true of the world at large, is true of ourselves. Here also, in our personal life, it is well to hold the doctrine of the pause. The hours when your work appears at standstill, and your hope with it, are just those when something beyond you is working for you. How much even of our mental operation is carried on without us ! The wearied brain, beaten by its problem, gives up the task. Later on we face the puzzle, to find the thing is done. How, we know not ; something beneath our consciousness has been at work for us. We take the result with rejoicing, not knowing what or whom to thank. It is the same in the deeper experiences of the soul. W. J.

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Locke, in one of his novels, makes his hero say : " I was going about in a state of suspended spiritual animation." Those of us who have passed many years in the world are familiar with that experience. There are times when the machinery of our faith seems to have broken down. Its foundations sink beneath us. It may have been the reading of destructive criticism ; or a mounting sea of troubles ; or the failure of health. Whatever the cause, paradise seems barred and bolted against us. We are in the desert, under a pitiless sky. We trudge on

With close-lipped patience for our only friend,  
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair.

Later, as we look back on those times, we find in them one of the best arguments for our present faith. We see in them the pause which was part of the music. They were the times when some of the soul's best work was going on underneath, work of which at the time we were ignorant. Our sad journey was on the road to an assurance better founded, to a realm of vaster horizons, where the doubts which had confounded us had become the instruments of a wider vision. Our sorrow had wrought in us new elements of strength. It is thus that we are remade, not once, but many times over ; for the apostolic saying, " Old things are passed away, behold all things have become new," is not a solitary experience, but one that, in our pilgrim's progress, is many times repeated.

The pause, which we have found everywhere in the rhythm of life, reaches its most dramatic expression in the act of death. Is that a pause only or a final end ? That would be a singular experience truly,

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for nowhere else have we met an end. Everywhere else have we found the seeming cessation of activity the occasion of another unseen activity, working towards a greater result. The breakdown of the visible machinery is the opportunity for another machinery, subtler and stronger. The Christian faith here, founded on what followed Christ's death, is backed also by what has followed in all the great pauses of history—the history of man, the history of his world. Here there is no final stop. The music resumes. The interval is a linking of a past and a future. That is the belief of all ages. Says Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations*: "There is, I know not how, in minds a certain presage, as it were, of a future existence. And this takes the deepest root and is most discoverable in the greatest geniuses and most exalted minds." Yes, indeed. Modern science is finding new grounds for that faith. It is for us to weave our acts and thoughts into such music as shall make that pause of death the prelude to a nobler harmony beyond.



## XIX

### SELF OWNING

THE world to-day is engaged in a vast dispute on the question of property. There are the widest divergencies of opinion—from the French Proudhon, who elaborately argues that property is robbery, to the English squire, who considers any interference with his territorial rights as a kind of sacrilege. But there is a question of property lying outside political controversy, one that is subtler and goes far deeper: it is that of the property in ourselves. In what way, and how far, do we possess ourselves? What here are the rights and duties, the possibilities of possession? How do we come by these rights, and what are the rules for their exercise? Is our right of possession a legal one, and if so, how can it be substantiated? If we are true owners, what are the foes that menace our property, and how can they be met? We are here evidently among the very deeps of life. Here are matters which concern not income-tax payers only, not only the recipients of Form IV., but every soul of us that lives, and concern us in the most vital way.

We come into this property unconsciously. We are born without knowing it. After a while we become

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aware of ourselves. Bit by bit the knowledge comes to us that we are something, a somebody. Here are sensations, faculties, powers, a will, a memory, a desire, that are ours and not another's. Shut up in a curious mechanism of flesh and bones, occupying a tiny area of the world's space, we find in us a realm of unseen things, a realm that is limited by no spatial bounds, for it inhabits infinity and eternity, and of this realm we are the one occupant. Where this machinery of intellect, of emotion, of volition, came from is the mystery ; assuredly we did not make it ; our feeble, slowly-growing " I " awakes day by day to new discoveries of these august powers, but is no creator of them. They belong to a system that was here before us and will be after us. The thought within us derives evidently from some vaster thought beyond us. But here, for the time being, is this miraculous treasure loaned out to us ; there, at our service every moment of the day, waiting for us each morning as we wake from sleep, linked by the sense of identity, declaring that it is the same thing as yesterday, and all for us to use or misuse in a thousand possible ways. Here is a property, the primal, the ultimate one, of all the sons of men.

But our earliest experience in life is to find this possession of ourselves a disputed one. We are born free, says Rousseau, to find ourselves slaves. One recalls the famous passage in which he describes how society, with its fashions, its conventions, its myriad authorities, civic and ecclesiastic, has bound and swaddled us, till we can neither sit, stand, nor move with natural freedom. His indictment is exaggerated,

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but there is truth in it. One of the problems which press us hardest to-day is to discover what of the limitations placed on us by society are good and what are evil ; to what extent we need to vindicate the possession of ourselves against these outside claims.

At the beginning these claims seem to cover the whole ground. We are under tutors and governors. We are at school to all the world. Nature takes a hand in this teaching, with methods of the roughest. By her knocks and thrusts, her pains and penalties, she shows us we cannot do what we like with ourselves. Her fire and water are not to be trifled with ; nothing of hers can be trifled with. We must learn her laws and obey them. We obey all round. Our elders impose upon us their views of religion and of conduct. Hoary institutions, the Church, the State, invade our territory and exact their dues. Society, with a hundred unwritten conventions, perpetually interposes its "yes" and "no." Companions cast their spell upon us, industrial conditions hold us ; we must work so many hours a day for our bread ; for our leisure a thousand outside things lie in wait—fashion, amusement, the urgencies of animal passion. All the estate of our souls seems pre-empted, with no vacant inch in it. How, in the midst of this entanglement, can we make any advance to the possession of ourselves ? Is such a thing possible, or even desirable ?

Plainly, the first thing for us to do here is to discriminate. We need at the beginning to know what is our true self and how it is related to the things outside. Evidently, we cannot possess ourselves in the sense of keeping everything else out. For our soul is

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essentially an absorbent. It grows by an incessant assimilation. As the acorn becomes an oak by drawing into itself the earth, air, rain and sunlight which surround it, so we become more and more ourselves by the indraft, at a thousand ports of entry, of the cosmos we are in. Our system is one of free trade with the universe. And thus we discover that all real teaching, all science, all fact, all the truths of things, come to us not as invaders of our territory, a foreign, dominating element, but as part of us, the extension, the reinforcement of our inner kingdom. We are in this way, as Cicero puts it, "servants of all the laws that we may be free." We possess ourselves only as we see our oneness with the whole of things. Every inner advance is a recognition of this fact. When we see a new truth, the soul at once knows it as its own essence. "That belongs to me ; I belong to it." We can never reach our humanhood in separation, as an isolated phenomenon. We are part of a universal harmony.

The possession of ourselves, then, is not a rebellion, but an obedience. But it is a free obedience. We accept the fact of things, the truth, the law of the world, not as an outside tyranny, but as part of our nature, the condition of our being. And this leads us deeper. For the ultimate of things is personality. The "I" is the centre of our being. It is always "I," "we," that possess. The powers, the faculties, are all agents of something that holds them as its own. And if personality is thus the root of our being, without which it is unthinkable, so personality is the root of all being. When Descartes said, "I think,

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therefore I am," he saw the proposition went farther than himself. For the universe, he found, was full of thought. And that thought implied a Thinker. The appeal to us of the universe is ultimately the appeal of this Thinker, out of whom our own thought has sprung; it is the appeal of God. And we meet Him as no stranger. He were unrecognisable if he were only outside. We know Him because He is within us, and like answers to like. "God," says Goethe, "is ever seeking Himself. He meets Himself in man."

We see, then, from the start, that the possessing ourselves, truly conceived, can never be a narrowness, a selfish isolation. It is rooted in obedience, in loyalty to the highest. It begins not by shutting its doors, but by opening them to a universe, to a hospitality which claims God as its guest. And this receptiveness will be no mere passivity. When in this way we possess ourselves, we shall want to make the property worth possessing. We inhabit this interior, and our first business is to furnish it. Here am I, established on this bit of infinite space, on this moment out of eternity, with the task in my hands to create myself. Here to me is offered the mystery of the power, the mystery of to-day, to do what I will with them. There are a hundred ways of frittering them, a hundred forms of meanness, of inconsequence, or moral ugliness, into which I may turn them. Shall I be content with these, with anything less than the highest possible?

If we decide for that highest, it will put us at issue on a good many points with the world as it is. You

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want, for instance, to fill your mind with the truth of things. That will put you at issue with numbers of people who instead want to fill you with themselves. You will have to wave away the whole race of mental despots, who, filled with the lust of power, are nothing less than spiritual beasts of prey. They urge upon you some old-world conception of God and man which they use as an instrument for dominating your mind. The priest or preacher, of whatever name, whose manifest desire is to help and inspire you, to stimulate your nobler part, is to be welcomed as a friend. But beware the man who comes to you with threats; who interposes his Church, his creed, between yourself and that ultimate truth which is your heritage. If he is to do all your seeing, your own eye will shrivel into blindness. His threat of damnation is an appeal to your courage. One recalls here that story of Lucian, as applicable to our time as to the second century: "Jupiter and a countryman, walking together, conversed with great freedom on the subject of heaven and earth. The countryman listened with attention and acquiescence, while Jupiter strove only to convince him; but when he happened to hint a doubt, Jupiter turned himself round and threatened him with his bolt. 'Ah, Jupiter,' says the countryman, 'now I know you are wrong; you are always wrong when you appeal to your thunder!'" To the teacher who comes to us as a brother, a helper in the task of seeing and doing, we say "All hail!" To the hunter who would capture us that he may add our scalp to his trophies, we say, as Diogenes to Alexander, "Stand out of my sunshine!"

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If we would possess ourselves, we need beware of all sorts of invaders. When we consider what, in this brief life of ours, there is to learn and to do, the common waste of time is appalling. What is the value we are putting on life when we give our hours and days to vapid amusements, to frivolous reading, to talk in which there is neither sense nor soul, to melancholic musings of doubt and despair? What is the secret of this perpetual rush to entertainment? Pascal says it is the mark of man's inner wretchedness; he seeks society because he dare not be alone with himself. However that may be, it is certain we should seek our own company oftener if we had made our company a little more valuable. For the full soul, at one with the universe, finds in itself the best society. It is never less alone than when alone. It is in company with the eternal. All things speak to it; a tree, a bird, the moving cloud, the face of a child, kindle it to inner raptures. Its solitude is a communion, a prayer, a hymn of thanksgiving.

You say, perhaps, "Your talk goes over my head. It is a farce to speak of me as in possession of myself. Our social system has taken care of that. I am a wage-earner, and belong by that fact to somebody else. My time and energies, my soul and body, are sold for bread. Your doctrine is for the leisured classes; for the mass of us it is a bitter mockery." To that we have two answers. The first is that work, however humdrum and mechanical, is, in itself, no robbery of our true self. It is often one of the ways of finding it. When your hand is on the tool, your mind is free. While making beds or scrubbing floors, your



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soul is often in the best condition for prayer, for high thinking, for true willing. "This is a fine occupation for a count!" sarcastically exclaimed Duke Geoffrey of Lorraine, when he found his brother Frederic washing dishes in a monastery. "You are right, Duke," was the answer. "I ought indeed to think myself honoured by the humblest service to the Master." Some of the purest emotions, some of the deepest thoughts, some of the finest spiritual growths and purposes, have reached men when at their handicrafts. It is in the world of honest labour, infinitely more than in the circles of luxurious leisure, that men reach their souls and find their manhood.

But there is another answer, one which England to-day needs to have dinned into its ears. The work through and in which men may reach their best selves must be of the right kind and under the right conditions. Says that eminent social reformer, Dr. J. B. Paton, on the creation of a yeoman peasantry:

"During the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by far the greater part of rural England was owned and tilled by yeoman-farmers and peasants. . . . Even the cottars had four acres of land attached to each cottage, which they held by a fixed tenure at a nominal rent; and this with rights of pasturage and ingathering of wood over seven millions of acres of common land and open woodland, which have since been almost wholly closed. . . . The history of those great centuries of Agincourt, of the Armada and of Marston Moor is largely explained by the character of the men who then dwelt in rural England and formed the bulk of its population. . . .

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Now, the whole of this order of men has been exterminated. . . . The fact remains that England, which was once, of all the countries of Europe, the richest in men who occupied and tilled their own land, is now, of all countries in Europe, the poorest in this class of men ! ” He contrasts our condition with that of France and of Germany, and quotes Shaw Lefevre as saying of the men whom our present system has destroyed, “ The armies of Cromwell were mainly recruited from this class.” “ We know,” he adds, “ the seriousness of thought that comes to men who labour apart, amid the great forces and scenes of Nature, and the strong individuality that is often stamped upon their lives.”

It is an entirely convincing statement. By a series of daring encroachments of the privileged classes, and the operation of industrial forces which, till now, we have hardly thought of controlling, the masses of our people have been robbed of themselves, of the means of becoming themselves. Our whole future as a nation depends upon the swift retrieval of a position which is half a blunder and half a crime. We must create afresh the type of men of which Richard Whiteing says : “ Yeomanhood, husbandry, above poverty and dependence, below luxury and idleness, what can match it for bringing out the best in man ! ”

A great, an infinitely complex operation truly is this business of gaining, of possessing ourselves. It is God’s work and our own. A thousand foes menace the possession ; we guard it at the price of an incessant vigilance. And for what end do we strive and watch ? Is it to keep this treasure as a miser his

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hoard ? Are we preaching here a colossal egotism ; a doctrine of what George Eliot calls " the miserable aims that end in self " ? It is the opposite of that, for the great possessing is always for the greater giving. We want to make ourselves worthy for the one end that what we offer to the service of God and of our fellow may be an offering of price.

Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.

## XX

### UNWORLDLINESS

WHAT do we mean by "worldliness" and "unworldliness"? The words are amongst the most hard-worked of our religious phraseology. There are few that carry with them a weightier significance of blame and of praise. And it is safe to say that there are few about which there exists a greater confusion of ideas, about which there is more need of some clear and sane thinking. It is an extraordinary thing, when you come to think of it, that there should be such words in our vocabulary at all. The idea that you are to dislike, disdain, and fight against the system of things in which you live, would seem at first sight an indictment of one's sanity. If we heard of a community of eagles who had decided that air was not good for them, or of a sect of whales who believed in the non-suitability and general worthlessness of water, we should imagine that these eagles and whales had become mentally diseased. Why quarrel with your environment? Is it not the very thing that fits you; the complement of your own organism, the answer to your needs, the condition of your activity,

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of your enjoyment? And yet religion, in one of its most authoritative utterances, tells us to "love not the world, nor the things of the world." The Greek word here used is *kosmos*, a word of the widest connotation. And the exhortation meets with an immediate affirmative response from the deepest part of our nature. That this is so is another illustration of the fact that man is the meeting-place of all the contradictions. We talk of "the riddle of the universe." It is man who is the riddle of the universe.

The phrase is fraught with meaning, with the weightiest ethical meaning. But the world has been a long time finding it out, and has stumbled into some curious blunders in the search for it. Our race has experimented widely and heavily in this matter of unworldliness, and that is good for us. It gives us the enormous advantage of being able to watch the results, and of perceiving what they amount to. We have, for instance, the view, which has dominated the East for countless centuries, and which, at an early period of Christianity, overflowed into the Church, that the visible world, the world of phenomena, the world open to the senses, is a fraud and a deception; that matter, as opposed to spirit, is intrinsically a bad thing, to be suspected, guarded against, and in all possible ways escaped from. The natural outcome of this idea was asceticism, which is the same thing, in fact, whether we find it in the Indian fakir, swinging on his hook, or in those monks of the Thebaid who had fled from their fellows as from a plague, who broke off from all family relations, who lived alone in caves,

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some of whom starved themselves to death, while others, like Simon Stylites, passed their days and nights on a naked pillar.

This idea of the essential badness of the material world survives in the West in still powerful, if somewhat attenuated, forms. It shows in the Catholic Church in the exaltation of celibacy above marriage, of the monastic life above that of society, in the supposed efficacy of bodily maimings and torturings. Its saintly traditions are full of sense-renunciations, of the acceptance of poverty, ugliness, and physical limitations as holy ; the ignoring of art, beauty, and pleasure as things unclean. It is boasted of St. Bernard that he journeyed a whole day by the lake of Geneva without being aware that there was a lake at all. St. Francis ate off the bare ground. St. Alphonse Liguori lived in a filthy chamber, in which scarce any ray of light penetrated. The same view, with many, extended to things of the mind. Ignorance was held sacred, and secular knowledge put under taboo. What a difference between the noble idea of Alexandrian Clement, that the Logos, the Light of the World, was the light of philosophy, and the view of Tertullian ! Says the one : " The beginning of light puts everything into light ; now all is Athens, all is become Hellas." Says the other : " What have Athens and Jerusalem in common ; what the Platonic Academy to do with the Church ? We have no further need of a desire for knowledge since Jesus Christ ; and no further need of scientific research since the Gospels." We remember the gibe of Erasmus, that in his time amongst the clergy it was thought

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a mark of holiness not to be able to read ; and that caustic remark of Montesquieu concerning the Church Fathers : “ Doubtless they have a laudable zeal for the things of the future life, but with a very little knowledge of the affairs of this one.”

In Protestantism the same tendency has shown itself under different forms. English Puritanism, and the Nonconformity which has descended from it, have, at various times, shown a certain distrust of beauty, which has not yet entirely disappeared. And they have been tolerably fertile in exclusions and prohibitions, for many of which it is difficult to find any principle founded healthily in the nature of things. With some, to be unworldly seems to have demanded that they should be grotesque. We are reminded here of a passage in Isaac Taylor’s “ Natural History of Enthusiasm ” : “ It has happened more than once in the history of Christianity that the habit of grimace in religion, having established itself in an hour of fanatical exaltation, and become associated perhaps with momentous truths, has long survived the warmth of feeling in which it originated, and has passed down from father to son, a hideous mask of formality, worshipped by the weak, and loathed, though not discarded, by the sincere.” Protestantism, too, has seen its cult of ignorance as a mask of unworldliness. In the Anabaptist uprisings which followed the Reformation in Germany, the leaders, many of themselves men of education, denounced human learning, and proposed the closing of colleges and universities as carnal institutions. At home, in our own day, we have known good men of the Free Churches



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deeply suspicious of secular knowledge as worldly and inimical to faith. A village local preacher—so the story comes in—in a burst of indignation at this species of worldly conformity, exclaimed: "What do preachers want with their Greek? Paul never wanted any Greek!"

There have been indeed all manner of queer ways of reaching the virtue of unworldliness. People have sought it in the cut of a garment, in a trick of speech, in a nasal intonation, in an upcast of the eye. There was a sect of ancient times called the Tascodrugitae, so called because they scratched their noses during prayer. It was considered, doubtless, as an unworldly procedure. That Pope also, we may be sure, considered himself as acting in an unworldly spirit when he wrote a malediction in the consecrated wine of the Sacrament in order that he might curse his enemy in the very blood of Christ.

We have spent too much time, we fear, in discussing the wrong roads through this region. Let us look now for indications of the right one. We shall not assuredly find the true unworldliness in abusing the creation in which we find ourselves. We do not believe in the *Maya* illusion doctrine of the Hindu philosophy. The world we live in is God's world, and He has not begun by telling us a lie about it. It is a reality, the first of realities. That it has other meanings than the first which presents itself is no reason for distrusting or ignoring that first meaning. Because there is a better does not mean that this world is intrinsically bad. That would be the worst of compliments to its Author. To believe in the future

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is not a command to disparage the present. To speak of matter as an evil product, to make a present of it to the devil, is a procedure as impious as it is ignorant. Most evidently so in the present day, when research has brought the conception of matter to so fine a point, to so intimate a relation to spirit, as to render the difference between them less and less perceptible. In the same way, the asceticism founded on the idea that what we see is a false idea of matter goes by the board. The body, as an instrument of spirit, instead of being maltreated and abused, is rather to be cherished and developed, that it may be an ever more perfect instrument. We say here rather with Browning—

To man propose this test :

Thy body at its best,

How far can that project thy soul on its lone way ?

Against all the asceticism, the monkish pessimism of past ages, we say that the world we live in, the world that meets the eye, the world of rivers and mountains, of spring flowers and children's laughter, the world of men and all living things, of art and beauty, of love and the family affections, is a real and lovable world, which God, its Maker, bids us rejoice in, and to take from it all the revenue it offers us.

What, then, is it to be unworldly ? Briefly, for we must be brief here, it is, while rejoicing in the seen, to believe with all our souls in an Unseen ; while holding to the present as good, to hold still more firmly to the future as a better. The unworldly man is one who takes the universe as spiritual, who finds the spiritual in himself, in his neighbour, in all things

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visible and invisible; who trusts in that spiritual as an uplifting force which is to bring in a better world than is now here, and which calls upon us all to help in the task. This spiritual in him, linked to the spiritual outside him, compels him every day and every hour to seek a higher than he has yet attained, knowing that to rest in his moral endeavour is always to go down; compels him equally to work for the betterment of his fellow, of the whole state of things in which he lives. This principle puts for him everything into its proper place, ranges things in their due proportion. His work, his amusements, his sense-enjoyments fall into line, taking their place in due order as instruments and furtherers of his highest soul. He is double-sighted; whatever his senses see, his soul sees, and sees so much more than comes upon his optic nerve. He is a speculator in life's highest values, and will touch no stock that does not yield these.

Observe how this reacts upon his conduct. He rejects without hesitation, and in a dozen directions, the code of modern society. Its enthusiasm for wealth and position leaves him cold. His love and honour are for those who, he sees, are striving on the upward path; he takes off his hat to those who, he knows, are higher than he. He is a believer in titles, but the titles are those won by the soul in the great service. Amidst the multitudes who to-day choose their politics as a help to their social status, or take them from the fashion of the hour, he makes his politics a part of his religion. He joins sides with those who work for the poor and needy, for justice and social righteousness.

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He is a politician of the City of God. He is ever of that heroic company—

Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream.

The unworldly man can to-day hardly be fashionable. Society, as it is at present constituted, is dead against him. The modern Press, the most venal perhaps the world has seen, the modern Press, whose circulation is apparently in inverse proportion to the size of its conscience, to which truth is the smallest of considerations, which preaches daily the gospel of force and of hatred, which lives by the pandering to passion and the lowest instincts, has for our idealist a contempt which it expresses with all the wealth of its rich vocabulary. He would be sorry to have, from that source, any other tribute. He smiles as he reads it, for he knows that he will win.

Yes, for the unworldly man is ever the creator of the newer, the better world. He is an optimist, sure of his cause. For that cause is the spiritual in man, the latest born of his faculties, but incomparably the mightiest. Existing at present as a thin streak at the top of his mind, it is there to stay and to grow until it has subdued him to its sway. This makes him a worker, a preacher of hope to the neediest and the worst. He shares here the audacity of Jesus, the audacity which chose publicans and sinners for disciples, knowing that in these, as in all souls, lay heaven's undeveloped Kingdom.

"Love not the world, neither the things of the world." Now we understand our apostle. No, we will

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not love the vulgar, sordid scene which the sensualist perceives ; the world where the animal is master ; where passion reigns ; where ambition is in place of service ; where self-interest is God. Instead, we will love God's world ; its free air and glorious beauty ; His image in it in man ; that better world which is slowly emerging from the struggling actual ; that unseen Holy of which this visible scene is the emblem ; that " pattern of things in the heavens " which shines down upon us from above, and towards whose perfectness our soul, with hope and infinite yearning, ever presses on.

## XXI

### THE UNEXPRESSED

OUR thesis is that the unexpressed is greater than the expressed ; that what is uttered is as nothing compared with what is unuttered ; that our pet formula has ever behind it, as its master, the unformulated ; that the depths of life are in its silences ; that more significant, more eloquent than her speech, is nature's reticence. Yet, at the beginning, let us guard ourselves against misconception. We hold no brief against the formula—no, nor against the plainest speaking. The man who gives us a clear explanation, who clears up our mystery, has done a service for which we should be grateful. We like people who say what they mean without *arrière pensée*. We detest that *mot* of the cynical Talleyrand that “ language was invented to conceal thought.” The people who put their faith into a creed are honest people, and their creed has good uses if it be taken the right way. Indeed, there are few things more wonderful than expression. Have we ever thought of what man has achieved by his language ? In the deeps of his soul there arise those formless things called thought and feeling. Who shall say what they are in themselves ? But straightway he sets his vocal organs in motion. They produce a mass of vibrations in the silent air.

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These, falling on the auditory nerve of his neighbour, strike inward to his mind, and lo ! the same thoughts and feelings, or something very like them, are there faithfully reproduced. Is there any miracle comparable to this passing of the invisible in me to the invisible in you ?

Nature herself is ever trying to speak. The human consciousness is, upon earth, her supreme effort to explain herself. She has treated man as her confidant, her father confessor, to whom she may whisper her secrets. And she is ever seeking to develop him in order that he may understand her better. He is as yet in a primitive stage as her interpreter. To an infinite consciousness, as Spinoza so finely puts it, she would offer an infinitude of meanings. Ours, at present, is a closely limited one, and we catch only a few notes of her measureless diapason. We look at her through the windows of our five senses, whereas we could imagine a hundred other senses, all equally with these roads into her reality. And these five windows, how restricted is the view from them ! Colour is produced by varying vibrations of the ether ; sound by another set in the atmosphere. But there are vibrations of these, calculable by mathematics, which bring no response of colour or sound to our senses ; they are beyond their reach. Who knows that man may not in his evolution grow into these perceptions, or develop new senses which will explore territories of being at present hidden from us ? Even now nature has her elect, to whom she talks in a language unknown to their fellows. There are organisations of exquisite sensibility to whom she seems to whisper in the ear.



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Maupassant, in his "*Vie Errante*," speaks of being thrown into ecstasies of bliss or depths of woe by a sound, a scent, the view of a face, or of a midnight sky. To some men a colour will be as the sound of a trumpet, a perfume the opener of secrets. And there are souls so finely dowered that through the visible they see ever the invisible, the world as a symbol, who find with Blake "infinity in a palm of the hand, and eternity in an hour."

And yet, while nature has been so gracious with us, has been at such pains to teach us, it remains that her silences are more than her speech. Philosophy has been for ages endeavouring to extract her secret, to reduce her to a formula, a scheme of thought. But always the formula is too narrow. What it captures is a shadow; the reality eludes it. Our scheme, so far from grasping the universe, is beaten by every single manifestation of it. Into every single fact there is crammed more meaning than our utmost analysis can reach. Take the fact of Christ. The disciples who sat at His feet, heard His word, saw His life and His death, tried to put the fact into words. Out of these have grown theologies, creeds, hymns, prayers, literatures, that have filled our libraries. Men have built the fact into temples, into institutions, have put it into paintings and sculptures; have set it to music; have absorbed it into their characters and lives. Wondrous productions, but the fact is so much more than them all. Do we suppose that what has come out of it has exhausted its content? It is still the unexpressed, carrying in its inmost core greater theologies, greater institutions, greater lives than have

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yet been seen. We gird sometimes at the mystery of the unexpressed—the mystery of life and the world. Do we think that we should be the happier without the mystery? It is the grandest thing we have. How poor a universe which we could see from end to end, compared with this immensity beyond our thought! The unknown is our treasure-house, and the inspiring thought is that, whatever the weight of gold we extract from it, there remain innumerable resources behind. A known world were a limited world. Were it all explained, we should see the bounds of our fortune. Happier we in this, where the payments, huge as they seem, are drafts on a bank whose coffers are inexhaustible.

But this is going rather far afield. We shall get nearer to what is practical when, turning from the outside universe, we study our theme in its relation to ourselves, to the movement of our inner thought and life. We have spoken already of language as an organ of expression. It is a miracle of human accomplishment, to which we can never sufficiently express our indebtedness. Our dictionaries contain tens of thousands of words, each one of which is a separate note on the soul's keyboard. These words are all thoughts hardened into concrete, unworn by million uses of them. Every shade of reality, so far as we have caught it, every thought, feeling, desire, every subtlest creature of the imagination, has there its symbol, its attempt at definition. We are largely under the rule of words. By them the orator sways the multitude, the Press reaches its readers, the Church sets forth its faith. But let us look at another side of this.

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There is a danger here—the danger that the rule become a tyranny, that it imprison instead of enlarging the soul. Remember, to begin with, that the words we use are all creatures of the past. . They are the congested thoughts of men that came before us. But we, inheriting the past, are more than the past; we hold in ourselves the present and the future. And, because that is so, we possess a something that language, as we use it, does not fully express, and by language, therefore, we are not to be too closely bound. Another thing is that no word contains the whole of the thing it stands for. Can you express the inmost of a feeling by any collection of vocables? We have just said that the disciples who sat at the feet of Jesus tried to put Him into words. Could they put the whole of Him there? Nay, could they put their feelings about Him there? Was not what they left out more than they could put in?

It is here, in these two considerations, that we see the impossibility of confining religion, or anything that touches the conduct of life, into a permanent utterance. Words are an appeal to the intellect, but religion is so much more than the intellect. Its beginning in the soul is deep down beneath the reach of language. Words about it are afterthoughts, trying to catch the living experience, but allowing it always to elude their grasp. This is what Augustine means when he says, "*Fides præcedit intellectum*," "Faith comes before knowledge." Construct your formula if you will, but do not expect too much from it. To suppose that of itself it will create faith is setting a dead thing to catch a live one. And while we are

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speaking of verbal confessions of faith, let us also remember this, that their use and duration must always be limited by one ever-present factor—that of the constant growth of the soul. They are something expressed ; but the expressed is always mastered by the unexpressed. Behind what one age has put down in black and white ever looms up a something not yet uttered, but mightier than any words that have yet been used. And when this intangible has solidified into utterance, it will, in its turn, become subject to the same law. For always the unseen is vaster than the seen.

The fact that the deepest realities cannot be put into words is perhaps best seen at the time and place when words are most in evidence. Take the case of a really inspiring preacher. There are such multitudes of them who, alas ! are not inspiring. Many of these are adepts in words. They know their dictionary. They know, in fact, quantities of things. They can give you history, theology, philosophy. They are familiar with all that is to be said on their subject, and they can put it into excellent English. But they cannot preach. Why ? Because preaching, the thing that wins men to the religious life, is something so infinitely more than the use of words. It is religion itself in a man's soul, an embodied infinitude which is living there, enthralling, possessing him, the feeling of a power beyond his own, which has consumed and overwhelmed him, which has filled to overflowing his own thought and feeling, and which must express itself or slay him. Listen to such a man and you are in contact not with words so much as a

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power behind them—a power which grasps you and will not let you go. He will not have it always; he has his dry seasons. And different men possess it in very varying degrees. But until a man's utterance is more than words, more by all the heights and depths of feeling, by all the unanalysable forces of the soul, he is no preacher to men.

There are many side-roads in this region of things which one is tempted to follow. One thinks, for instance, of the many lives which never find in themselves their full expression. They are the heroes of the unrecorded. We read continually of beautiful souls, themselves hid from the world, but pouring their treasures of love and care into others, who, by their inspiration, have accomplished great things in the eyes of men. Often that has been woman's function. It is the mother who has made the famous son, the sister who has been to the brother as a hidden fire. We think of what Olympias was to Chrysostom, Paula to Jerome. We read of Macrina, the sister of Basil, and of Gregory of Nyssa, who, when Basil was twenty-six, "woke him as out of a deep sleep to the true light of the Gospel." We know what Jacqueline was to Pascal, and Henriette to Renan. Along this line we meet surely what is noblest in human life; the love which sacrifices itself, which seeks no personal reward, which is satisfied that another shall shine in the light of its wisdom, shall forge his way onward by aid of their secret force. Of all energies it comes nearest the sheer grace of God; is, indeed, in the patient heart of the helper and in the recipient of the help, a form of that grace.

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In the tumult of our modern life, amid the confused din of its many-tongued utterance, we need continually to look to what is beneath, to what is unexpressed. One might think, to listen to the voices which shriek in our modern Press, that the world were more securely than ever in the grip of the devil. We are called to imperialism, to patriotism, to militarism, as the highest of our privileges, the foremost of our duties. Beneath this clamour, if we look steadily, we discern a hidden thing ; it is the panic of the brute instinct in us, specially dominant in certain classes—the most vocal classes—against the formation of another sentiment which is destined to destroy “ these dragons of the prime.” This sentiment is beginning already to find its voice and to ask questions. “ What do you mean by your imperialism ? If it stands, as it seems, for an empire of which we have to brag and boast, which is to use its power to beat down competitors, to inflame its members with the intoxication of a false glory, we will have none of it. Man’s function, in or out of the ‘ empires,’ is plainly not that. He is here not to dragoon but to help, not to boast himself but to serve. Your militarism is out of date ; sufficient for the past that nations should exist without conscience ; that they should take pride as masses in what they detest as individuals ; that they should conceive thieving and murdering, when we call it war, as anything other than thieving and murdering at our own doorstep ; that assassination in masses is any less detestable than the assassination of individuals ; that to settle a national quarrel by stabbing and shooting is any less barbarous than in this way to

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settle a private one." Against all this devilry there is a spirit arising, only half articulate as yet, but which in time will find its hand and its tongue. Already it has eyes in its head, and can see the real shape of these monsters, hitherto so cunningly disguised. When it fully finds its voice it will call them by their true names. Its unexpressed will by and by come into form, in deeds and charters of the human solidarity. It will erase some words from its vocabulary and put new ones in their place. It will cease to speak of the foreigner, the alien, the foe. It will know humanity as one, a common brotherhood, with equal claim upon our service and our love.

Good and marvellous is the expressed, but the unexpressed is better. Behind all we see looms up that which is yet to be seen. The world's great wonders are yet to come. We see now all we are equal to seeing. But we are linked to a spiritual realm which is ceaselessly at work upon our soul and its faculties. With their growth our universe will grow. That is, it will reveal itself, opening up its mysteries, showing the wonders of its hidden beauty, exhibiting itself ever more clearly as the visible garment of God.



## XXII

### PROGRESS

WHAT is Progress? There are thinkers who would allow no place for such a question. It takes, they would say, too much for granted. It supposes there *is* such a thing as progress, a proposition which they deny. The pantheism of Spinoza, for instance, leaves no room for progress. Its conception of God as the All, the infinite Substance, exhibited in the forms of extension and thought; a God identified with the universe, whose perfection you cannot add to or take from—this conception, we say, bars us from all thought of a real going on. This view has captivated many able minds, but to us it bears a strong resemblance to Zeno's demonstration of the impossibility of motion. It is a wonderful demonstration, but we disprove it by moving. We prove progress by progressing.

One might say much more, but we pass to another argument more insistent, apparently more scientific, which has cut deepest of all into the modern mind. It is the materialist argument, as used by Büchner, Max Nordau and other writers of that school, based on what they speak of as the observed facts of life. All seeming progress, they say, is merely a movement from nothing to nothing. Growth and expansion are always a journey to decay and extinction. The years

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which develop the seedling to the tree, bring it by and by to the withered trunk. The child becomes the full-grown man, only later on to reach senility and death. And this, which happens to individuals, happens to the worlds. Our planet's history, with all its age-long development, with its growth of arts, civilisation, religion, is, when all is said, the history of a body hurrying from the catastrophe which produced it to another catastrophe which will destroy it. Mr. Balfour, in his "Foundations of Belief," describes in an eloquent passage what, according to the naturalist theory, is to happen to us: "After a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the dimensions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. . . . The uneasy consciousness which, in this obscure corner, has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest."

According to this theory the idea of progress is, of course, the absurdest of illusions. For it means that everything ends in nothing. Our thirst for God, our struggles for a nobler humanity, for a more spiritual religion, are merely futile episodes in a process which is to land us in the *néant*. From the ether we came, and to the ether we shall return. This philosophy boasts of being founded on the facts of things. But it has left out one little fact, the fact of human nature. And human nature, after all, is the source of all the philosophy we have. Our nature, we find,

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is, curiously enough, conducted on the idea of progress. As surely as it is built on the belief in air and food and exercise as necessary to it, so it is built on the notion of the upward movement, the idea of perpetual betterment. All its work, from making a brick out of clay to the founding of a state, goes on that supposition. If the idea is a false one, man has been made all wrong. But he could not go on existing if that were so ; if his structure were not in harmony with its environment.

And these reputed facts as to decay and dissolution ; what, after all, do they amount to ? Your fire burns out, but nothing of it has been lost. Its every particle is there, in another form. Your tree withers and dies—to appear as something else. We see decays that are a marvellous progress. You pound pitchblende ; crush it out of its original form. From tons of it treated in this brutal way you extract the fraction of an ounce of radium. Your destruction of the rock has meant really an enormous promotion of it in the sphere of power. Solid matter is but locked-up energy waiting to be liberated. The seeming decays and deaths of it are but a setting free of unknown powers. Are there no hints here about larger things ? The notion that the end of a planet's life is a real end is too wild a guess. It is contrary to the whole analogy of things as we see them. It supposes there is no universe but that we see, whereas we are aware in ourselves of a universe we do not see. If there is an essence of pitchblende in radium, why should there not be an essence of this planet and its vital life to be extracted when the time comes ?

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The Spinoza doctrine and the materialistic doctrine are both, though not in the same way, opposed to the order which science discloses. As against the one, with its view of the universe as an eternal static, we find it a realm which is ever striving to be better than it is, pointing to a perfection it has not yet reached, the handiwork of a Power higher than itself. As against the naturalism which sees a future only of decay and death, it reveals a movement upward of which catastrophe and destruction are ever an incident and never a finality. If the crushed rock shows as result only a higher, liberated power, are we to hold that the intelligence which crushes the rock has in itself no similar possibility?

Through immeasurable ages our planet has been going one way; working out its problem of life. None but an eternal spectator could discern in it from century to century any perceptible movement. Some geologists give fifty million years from the Laurentian period to the early Pleistocene. Marsupials and lemurs appear in the lower Eocene strata, supposed to be three million years old. Manlike apes come in the Miocene period nigh a million years ago. Then we have *pithecanthropus*, or erect man-ape, a quarter of a million years back, the herald of the human race. Think of that number of nights and days, in which our planet has been circling round the sun; where from æon to æon you see no hint of change, yet the change ever going on; change from simple to complex, from low to high, from *amœba* to quadruped, from beast to man, from savagery to civilisation, from the then to the now!

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And the movement always one way ! Can we imagine that this age-long labour is all for nothing ? That this eternal making is for nothing but the final pleasure of destroying ? To destroy is the lowest exercise of power. A *petroleuse* can burn down the Tuileries ; she could not build one. The universe contains more intelligence, more moral value than a mere passion for destruction. A fool can kill ; it takes a God to create. If the universe teaches us anything, its story is of the eternal progress, under the guidance of One greater than itself.

But if we believe in progress, let us be well assured what we mean by it. Man, in his efforts for betterment, is, we have tried to show, on the right track, following a cosmic movement which is not going to deceive him. But he follows it with varying success. He has to be taught by his mistakes, and he makes a good many. On the road he is continually meeting by-path meadows which lead to the prison of Giant Despair. In his hurry for sectional gains he so often loses more than he wins. He seems to have to pay heavy discount on his every transaction. Take, for instance, our modern civilisation. Can we speak of that as in all respects a going on ? Everything we do in it carries its drawback. We build the town and lose the robustness of the countryman. We invent the watch and lose the savage's instinct of time. We make roads and put up signposts and are lost, as the Indian never is, in the trackless forest.

Contrast the America of a hundred years ago with the America of to-day. Ours is the age of a thousand wonderful inventions, all of which are exploited to

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their utmost extent in the great republic. That we call progress. But what of the average human condition? A century ago the American population was hardy, frugal, industrious and well-to-do, living largely on the land, with few bloated fortunes, but, on the other hand, no abject poverty. What is the spectacle to-day? According to Dr. Whiton, 1 per cent. of the population own as much wealth as the remaining 99 per cent. In Boston during the year 1903, 136,000 people, or 20 per cent. of the population, were assisted by the public authorities. One in every ten who die in New York is buried a pauper. The *Times* New York correspondent recently stated that two-thirds of the inhabitants of that city live in tenement houses that have over 350,000 living-rooms into which, because they are windowless, no ray of sunshine ever enters. The English story is not dissimilar; is, in some respects, even worse. Contrast the position of the Northern cloth-worker of the eighteenth century, as pictured then by Arthur Young, doing his work at home, with his lusty sons and daughters as assistants, all comfortably housed and fed, living in the open country, with that of the modern operative, housed in a Manchester slum, pallid, undersized and shrunken, and you realise that our "industrial progress" has not been all gain. We have yet to understand that progress, in any real sense, is a human progress—of body, soul and spirit—and not a machinery progress, a money progress.

We are full to-day of political progress, and it is well to know what we mean by it. Enthusiasts point us to the democratic movement, to Reform Bills, to

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the enfranchisement of the masses, the abolition of privilege, the lessening power of feudalism and the growing power of the toilers. We subscribe to all that, and to more in the same direction. We want a national well-being, not the well-being of one class founded on the ill-being of another. But let us be quite clear on the point. Does anyone suppose we are on the way to betterment by simply putting one class in power in place of another? That by itself would be to substitute one greed for another, to substitute an old badness for a new one. An Australian correspondent of the present writer complains of the dominant working class out there as pursuing a purely class and selfish policy. Whether that be so or not, we are not anxious for this kind of development. There can be no political progress apart from the growth in us all, rulers and ruled, of a new spirit—the spirit which recognises power, not as a goal of ambition, as an opportunity of self-interest, but as a call to service for the welfare of the whole. A republic, said Montesquieu, must be founded on virtue. The State, observes Lassalle—and it is one of the best things he uttered—“shall be the institution in which the whole virtue of manhood shall realise itself.” The gist of it all is that political redemption, to be real, must have under it a spiritual redemption. The nation will not move upward till its soul has moved upward.

It comes again to this, that the one progress we have to plan and work for is the progress of man, of his body, his brain, and, above all, of his soul. And how slow has been the movement here ; what lapses, what



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retrogressions ! | Compare the modern Egyptian with his far-off ancestor, according to what we read of him in perhaps the oldest book in the world, "The Precepts of Pta-ho-Tep." This book, at the time of the fifth dynasty, is full of the highest morality, where special stress is laid on the vital importance of training children, and of making a son a true gentleman ! And have we Christians got far ahead of those Essene communities whom Josephus and Philo describe for us ; who laboured in agriculture for their subsistence, who practised the strictest temperance ; of whom we read : " Here everyone is master of his passions and a friend of peace. In all their work the brethren obey the directions of their superiors ; only acts of kindness and mercy are left to their own discretion. Truthfulness in every word is strictly enjoined ; they bind themselves to honour God, to practise righteousness towards men, always to hate the unrighteous and to help the righteous, to be faithful in his relations with all " ? The world has moved since then towards vaster things than Egyptian or Essene ever conceived. Nevertheless, our modern society, in contemplation of such habits of life, might well turn to the recovery of some of these lost ideals instead of boasting itself overmuch. |

For these people believed in the soul, and it is the one thing to believe in. It is the one possession we have that is fortified against decay, whose development can be carried on to life's latest moment. The years take from us everything else : our bodily vigour, our mental force, our friends, our place and position in the active world. But in this inmost centre of life we can

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go on still growing, making our losses, our very weakness, an occasion of its further discipline, the incentive of its deeper energies, of its immortal hopes.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made;  
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,  
As they draw near to their eternal home.

Let us be of good cheer. We are in the order of progress. And our own stroke of work, if it be an honest stroke, will tell in it. Is it not better, after all, to be in an unfinished world, with ourselves as helpers towards its perfectness, than merely spectators of one where anything is done and finished? Herein is the greatness and joy of our calling, to be not lookers-on, but co-workers. Let us see to it that in our work and life we follow, and help our brother to follow, the true roads of progress, and not the false ones.

## XXIII

### DARKNESS

ENGLAND is familiar with darkness. Situated high up in the northern seas, she has long months under the dominion of old night. There are weeks and weeks in her year when the sun is the rarest of visitants ; when her few hours of daylight are filtered through an endless drift of cloud, and reach us more as a gloom than a gleam. Our sunshine, then, is at second hand ; a sunlight bottled up for us countless centuries ago in coalmines, and made to shine again in our streets and rooms by art and man's device. These are days when we think of the glorious blaze at the Cape and the Antipodes, and long to take ship and sail for the South. We become weather-pessimists, and have to fight for our cheerfulness. Dr. Johnson once abused Boswell for grumbling at a wet day ; the Doctor's protest, we fancy, was rather an explosion of his own spleen than a vindication of the weather. Is there, then, to be no praise of the dark ? It is a good time to bethink ourselves of that subject. It is of no use saying that black is white ; the blackness is here, all too palpable. Let us rather say that black has its uses, and invaluable ones. We should get on

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so badly without it. December is the time to remind ourselves that its long nights are as essential to our well-being as the long days of summer; to remind ourselves of all we owe to the dark.

Has it ever occurred to us that the world's optimism was born in the wintry North? The East is the land of the sun. India is drenched with sunlight. But study the Indian peoples; study their literature, their theology. Contrast the ruddy, full-blooded Englishman with the swart Hindu. The Western man gets more enjoyment out of one day than the Eastern in a year. They do not laugh in India. Their philosophy, their religion, exhibit to us thousands of years of unmitigated pessimism. They both are based on the bane and pain of existence; the deliverance they offer is a deliverance from personality, from the plague of consciousness. Their vocabulary is significant. Sunshine is with them the simile of ill-being; the shade, of well-being. That Eastern note is given us in the Bible, a book of the Orient. The blessing promised there to the faithful is that "the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." Clearly you can have too much of sun.

Man is made for changes, for alternating stages, for opposites, the one necessary to the other, the one enhancing the value of the other. And he prospers most where these alternations are the most varied and pronounced. All this was thought out when our planet was poised at that singular angle to its orbit which gives us the succession of the seasons. Without that tilting of our planet we should never have known the rapture of the spring, that glide from spring to summer, and

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from summer to autumn, which makes each year a moving picture of wonder and of beauty. Our diurnal motion gives us day and night. Nature here is as a mother who wakes us with the kiss of sunrise, bids us to our work and play; and then, when our energies are exhausted, draws her curtain over us and hushes us to sleep. But that is the least of her service. She knows us as children; but children not of time only but of eternity. Do we suppose this ordering of night and day has only a temporal, a physical significance? We have only to look into history, or into any human heart, to spy her deeper meaning. The day opens to man the earth; his place, his activities there; the night reveals to him the heavens. The light illumines but narrows him. It hides more than it shows. It shut him in to his mountains, his seas, his cities, his business, as though this were all. It is night that opens his window and tells him he is citizen not of a world only but of a universe. The day is of the finite; the night of infinity. And so while one part of him sleeps, another awakes. He finds then his doubleness. In the deeps that the darkness stirs he catches glimpses of his vaster self. In trying to interpret it he has plunged into strange phantasies, wildest imaginings. He is a long way yet from the actual truth. But that is evidence not of his imbecility; rather of the enfolded vastness of his being and of his destiny. The day gives him his near, the night his far, look. In view of that solemnity he cannot help being religious. "I will have your church tower knocked down," said a revolutionary leader to a Breton peasant, "that you may have no object to recall

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to you your old superstitions." "Anyhow," was the reply, "you will have to leave us the stars, and those can be seen farther off than our church tower!"

Consider the miracle of the night. In the sleep it brings we reach the world's essential democracy. There we touch our original equality. As he sleeps the prince is no more than the peasant. He knows nothing of crowns, dominions, the pomps and pleasures of his place. He may dream that he is a cobbler, while the cobbler finds himself a king. For a broad space of every twenty-four hours we lose our position, our money, our faiths and philosophies, the very care of ourselves. There are powers then working in us over which we have no control. Something other than ourselves, or some unknown part of ourselves, takes charge, plays all manner of pranks with us. What artist is it who paints these pictures, so lifelike, so alive with colour? What dramatist who unfolds to us these tragedies, which we look at as outside spectators, breathless for the next scene? And all this to vanish with the night, while our consciousness, without an effort, picks up again our lost life, restoring it, without a thread of the connection lost or broken! Sleep is a mighty hint of our unimagined possibilities.

We are all enthusiasts of the light, but let us have also our praise of darkness. We are not sufficiently mindful of what we owe to it. All the great vital processes go on in the dark. If you want your seed to sprout, you must bury it. Daylight and sunshine will help to make your corn, but for the real start of its life it must go underground. Nature covers your

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body with a skin, more or less exposed to the air and the general gaze. Here on the surface is all your bravery of feature—your complexion, your beauty, your plainness—for the world to look at. But the real business of keeping you alive is within, deep down, remote from the view. Those billions of cells which form your tissues—each one a separate life—do their work unseen. Your heart, your lungs, your vital organs, toil all of them in the dark. The real factors of you shun publicity. Physically, you are a creature of the night.

Your thoughts, too, are born in the dark. The conscious self which you know is the product of a self beneath it, which you do not know. Whence our ideas come, how they are created, what are the factors which produce them—all this is as hidden from us as is the centre of the sun. Who is the genius who works inside a genius? The genius himself is the last person who can tell you that. Some of Goethe's best inspirations, both in poetry and science, came to him in dreams. Sir William Hamilton conceived the invention of quaternions while walking with his wife in the streets of Dublin. The flash of discovery came to him just as he was approaching the Brougham Bridge. To Mozart came the aria of the beautiful quintette in *The Magic Flute* while playing a game of billiards. An inventor suddenly struck the proper way of constructing the prism for a binocular microscope while reading a novel. Who were the real workers here? We remember Stevenson's talk of the "brownies" who did his creative business for him. Call them brownies or blackies, or whatever name



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you choose;” the fact remains that the clear image which is formed in the brain is the result of operations carried on by unseen agents in a world unknown.

The deeper we penetrate into this theme the more significant are its results. Observe the process of the spiritual life. Here again we perceive that the vital process takes place in the dark. Read the lives of the great souls, and you will find almost always that their inner career begins with a period of night and darkness. With some, as with Paul, Bunyan, Tolstoy, it is a despair of themselves and their world. With others, it is a crash of the creed in which they were brought up, and a dreary scepticism when all their stars go out and there seems naught left but chaos and old night. It is singular that we have read so many of these experiences, and perhaps have gone through them in our turn, without asking the reason of all this. Are we not here in contact with a psychological law; the law that, in a lower order, we perceive in the germination of the plant, in all the vital processes? The spiritual life, like all other life, requires darkness and the deep for its starting-point! A man must dive into his inmost recesses in order that he may find himself. The nearer lights must be put out that the far view may get its chance. Why is it that so many of us have begun by rejecting a creed? It is not necessary to say it is the fault of the creed. The reason, the main reason at least, lies in ourselves. The creed, as it stands there, cannot feed us. It is a creation of the hard, dry light. The men who made it had in their day their own inner process, but the creed they offer us, though a product of it,

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is not that process, or anything like it. Here you have to work out your own salvation. You are in want of life, your own life, and that must begin deeper down. The doubts, the fears, the rejections, the despairs, are nothing else or less than the clods thrown upon the soul, under the shadow of which the life miracle is wrought. All life, from the lowest to the highest, is alike ; it follows one law of birth and growth. The soul's night of an Augustine, of a Bunyan, your night and mine, are akin ; akin not only to each other but to the growth of the corn, to the bloom of a flower.

We have spoken of the alternations of day and night ; of sleeping and waking. But these alternations go farther. As we study the long process of history, and what has taken place in ourselves, we find a deeper thing. Our faculties, our desires, have their alternations ; there are periods when one sleeps while the other wakes. And that, we may be sure, is no matter of chance, still less of any Divine abandonment. Man's evolution demands that he shall have an infinite variety of experiences, of trainings. All that is in him must have its turn. We see a population, in the heat of a religious revival, with its whole soul bent in one direction. It is occupied with its far-look. Its mood is ecstatic, its one concern the spiritual interests. Earnest enthusiasts want this to last for ever. But it does not. The fires burn out, leaving a good deal of ash and cinder. Other claims assert themselves ; people are again adjusting their vision to the near view. Is this a mere inconstancy, a set-back of the kingdom ? Since it always happens we should, perhaps, be better

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occupied in seeking the law of it. Do we not find it in the fact that man's complex of faculties have each their sleeping and waking times ; that, to his balance and his growth, the sleep is as necessary as the waking ; that no one of his faculties can be exercised indefinitely ; that they must have their night of rest and recuperation as well as their day of exposure ? Man is made not for prayer only, but for work ; not simply to probe his soul, but to probe his world ; to tunnel its mountains, to found its industries, to create its arts and civilisation. In the vast process of his education man has to take himself in turns. That is not of our ordering ; it is the way we are made, and it is not for us to quarrel with the scheme.

Night has got a bad name, but that is man's doing, and not nature's. Who is it that said the reason why the British Empire is one on which the sun never sets is because the Almighty cannot trust John Bull in the dark ? The jest has a more personal application. There are so many of us not to be trusted in the dark ! Night is a creator of extremes. It stirs in us the best and the worst. And the worst is still so sadly in evidence. Society consists of two classes, the builders and the destroyers, and it is in the night the destroyer is abroad. The night histories of our great cities will not bear the telling. Here, in our centres of civilisation, along our brave streets and beside our noble buildings, are sloughs and quicksands where fine young natures are engulfed, thrust in by demonic hands and none to warn or stretch the saving hand. We register our shipwrecks ; in war time we count our dead and wounded. But of these engulphments

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we make no record, we take little heed. Yet they are the worst of our national disasters !

The harlot's cry, from street to street,  
Is weaving England's winding-sheet.

The destroyers here must be counterworked by the builders. Our city life calls for recruits, skilled in the work, who shall drain these morasses, fill up the yawning gulfs, fence the dangerous ways, and make them safe for the weak and the unwary.

Night and darkness, with their uses and abuses, are, after all, of limited area. The sunlight is so much more than they. This ebon blackness, so seeming all-enveloping, is merely a result of your position on a sloping planet. The night's dimension is a trifle compared with the light that is abroad. All around you, though you cannot see it, the pulsing beam is raying out from the centre, spreading through the immensity of the outer spaces. It is *you* who are in the night, not the solar system. It is not for lack of sunshine that you see nothing. That is an affair of your present position, your present need. And when the need is gone, the night will go. Your destiny is not the night, but the day. Your darkest hour is only its prelude. We see already the boundary of the night, for

On the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God makes Himself an awful rose of dawn.

## XXIV

### EQUALITY

THE great struggle of to-day—a struggle which makes all mere party contests a trivial affair—is for a true social system. Bentham defined the object of politics as, in his celebrated phrase, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number.” But we go farther than that. We can be content with nothing less than “the greatest happiness of all.” A new passion of humanity is abroad, which makes us feel that we cannot be happy apart from the happiness of our brother. And our brother is every human being, every minutest member of the social fellowship. But the struggle for this is such a terribly confused one, so horribly obscured by political and social ambitions, by selfish interests, by partisan cries, and not the least by misleading watchwords. One of these, about which we are most grievously in need of some clear thinking, is the word “equality.” The word has been for long one of the inspirations of democracy. “Liberty, equality, fraternity,” was the war-cry of the French Revolution. It stood in the forefront of the American War of Independence. In the Declaration of 1776 the famous document proceeds: “We hold these

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truths to be self-evident : that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights," and so on. Before that Hobbes had said the same thing in England, and Rousseau in France. What did they mean, what does anybody mean, by this doctrine of equality ? It is odd that America, with this declaration on its banner, should for long decades after have kept millions of men in slavery. They followed here the principle of Aristotle, who, while contending for the equality of the Greek citizen, regarded slavery as one of the foundations of the State. Here in England, and in the twentieth century, we have by no means yet cleared up the confusion. We need go back to first principles.

We want to know, first, whether equality, in the generally accepted sense, is natural ; and, secondly, and chiefly, whether it is a condition of that " greatest happiness of all " which we have spoken of as the goal of true social reform. And here, as everywhere, nature may well be our teacher. There is a great deal of equality in nature's handling of us. She sends her rain upon the just and the unjust. It will pour as plentifully on the duke as on the pauper. Her December and her June weather are dispensed with an admirable impartiality. Her fog can be as dense in Grosvenor Square as in Whitechapel. Our planet as it courses round the sun metes out to the richest and the poorest the same allowance of day and night, of winter cold and summer heat. To us all, under average conditions, come the same strength of youth, the same decay of old age. And after the usual span

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of years we are returned punctually to mother earth.

Sceptre and crown must tumble down ;  
And in the dust be equal laid  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

While we are above ground, nature deals out a good deal of equality amongst us. The qualities of things are entirely democratic. If an emperor runs his head against a stone wall he will get from it precisely the same reception as if he were a labourer. A rope will hang you or water will drown you without the slightest reference to your social position. An orange will taste the same in the mouth of a millionaire as in that of a bootblack. If there is any difference it will be in favour of the bootblack. Sea-sickness will upset a duke in the same brutal way as a day-tripper. In the king's palace as in the shepherd's hut love and hate, fear and hope, the joy of achievement and the pang of disappointment are the same things, and make themselves felt just in the same way. We might trace the similarity in a thousand ways. This is the democracy, the equality of nature.

Nature is that ; but then, so much else. She will not allow us to imprison her in any of our neat formulas. Up against her equalities, standing out from them, growing right into them, she poses her inequalities. She is a unity, but with a passion for difference, for variety. Across her plains she flings her range of mountains. She will have her rivulets, but also her Amazons. Out of the mosses and grasses tower her elms and oaks. By the side of the insect stalks behemoth. And no wildest radical of us but rejoices in this state of things. We love to look up from



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the small to the great, from the plain to the height. Herein lies all our world's beauty, its wealth of give and take. And this is the story of man as well as of his abode. The world's happiness is in its unevenness. It is inequality that has made man's soul. Out of this has come his reverence and his worship, his pity and his generosity, his humility and his ambition, his humbleness and contrition, his energy and striving. Think out the origin of these character-features, and you will find it is so. There were no worship were there none higher than ourselves ; no service had not someone needed it ; no sympathy, no generosity, without some lowness beside us ; no humility but in the presence of something greater.

Nature scoffs at the notion of a general equality. She ushers us into a world full of superiorities. Man's first lesson is to feel how little he is. He will not increase his importance by denying God. He is governed, however he may disavow a governor. The scheme he is in, whatever he may make of it, is big enough to reduce him to microscopic proportions. It is a scheme, too, which holds him in with a very tight rein. And apart from cosmic relations, as members of society we begin in inequality. We start in a family every member of which is older, bigger and stronger than ourselves. No revolution will ever succeed in putting the child on a level with its parents, or the pupil on the level of the teacher, or the fool on the level of the wise man. In the sphere of human society we find, in fact, the same order of things as in the outside world. Over against the plain rise the mountains ; there are trickling streams and

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mighty rivers ; the tiny floweret and the giant of the forest. This is by an older law than any tinkered constitution of ours, and no referendum is likely to repeal it.

If nature had not put these imperatives upon us, we should have sought for them ourselves. We cannot get on without our human heights. When, in some social convulsion, they momentarily disappear, we look round for new ones to put in their place. At such times it is a sight to watch the strongest man revealing himself and coming to the front. In the English revolution, when crown and throne had tumbled, and all was a welter of confusion, we see the man Cromwell slowly, steadily emerging from the mass. He pits himself against one opponent after another, one combination after another, always with the same result. Finally the nation sees in him its first, its strongest, and he takes his place accordingly.

It is the same story with France and Napoleon. Here is a native endowment of force and faculty before which everything, everybody gives way. The early history of the conflict is almost amusing. The little officer of artillery is appointed to the army of Italy. The two old commanders there, bluff soldiers of the Republic, know nothing of the Corsican, and are prepared to treat him with contempt. He arrives, and sends for them. He keeps them waiting in his ante-room ; then suddenly appears with his hat on ; in a few sentences gives the orders for the day, and dismisses them with a wave of his hand. One of them, recounting afterwards the experience, recorded his stupefaction : "*Ce petit b—— m'avait fait peur !*"

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"The little corporal" carried on his front and in his eye nature's proclamation of the biggest man. The war chief is by no means our ideal, but he serves as illustration of the law that man must have his leader. His happiness is in finding him. If only he can find one who will lead him right!

Equality, then, in this sense, is not what we find in nature. It is not her primary object; nor should it be ours. Our happiness, our welfare, do not lie there. The true soul finds its bliss in looking up—the child to its parent, the saint to his God. The masters, wherever we find them, in art, in literature, in religion, are our treasures. We feast on their achievements. What they have won is an addition to our own life; their example is the finest stir to our energies. We are glad that here, too, our plain is girded with mountains. The man who does not rejoice in meeting a better than himself has not learned the alphabet of right living.

These are commonplaces. State them and the obviousness appears. But a number of questions arise out of them, which are not so easy, where our public opinion is in a quite primitive stage. We are agreed about inequality, about leadership, the doctrine of the better man. But whose leadership are we following? What is our standard of superiority? We have some singular eminences thrown up on our modern plain, toward which great masses of us are laboriously climbing. Our topmost height is a pile of gold. The man who is there on it is of "the upper classes." It does not matter in the least how he got it, or what he does with it. Possession is nine-tenths

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of our new moral law. With this he can buy a title, and annex any blue blood there is left. The world's eye is fixed on this peak with religious adoration. Towards it everyone is straining upward. The better man is the man who belongs to a more exclusive club than your own; who dresses better, who owns the yacht you cannot afford.

That is the latest cult, the social religion. Yet it is not going to last. It will not last because it is badly founded. It rests on the negation of the soul, and the soul is an awkward thing to ignore. It has a way of breaking up from beneath, as vegetation will burst through a rotten pavement. Already one feels the breath of change. And the breath is blowing as of yore, from Galilee. The strange, the revolutionary fact of our time is that Jesus Christ is actually, here and there, beginning to be taken seriously. Locked up for long in the metaphysics with which theology had swathed Him, kept in the skies to be hymned and chanted at, He is now by growing multitudes being accepted as having something really to say about the social order, about the true way of living. In His light these people are coming to see that there is no greatness at all but that of the soul; that, as Francis in the thirteenth century said, "A man is as great as he is in the sight of God and no otherwise." They see, too, that the business of man is to find his greatness, not in ambition, but in service; not in increasing the distance between himself and his humbler brother, but in lessening it; not in climbing to fashion's gaudy pinnacles, but in reaching downwards to where the needy are and helping them

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along. Upon these people has dawned the amazing fact—hid for centuries in a theological tenet, but now seen as incarnating the one and only social law—that humanity's greatest soul humbled Himself, took deliberately His place among the labourers, accepting their lot, pouring His soul into theirs, living and dying for their happiness. That truth has at last come, and we shall never again let it go. It is to remake the future, and the process is beginning. It is to be our politics, our social code, and that because it is at last to be our religion.

One of its first effects will be in a new doctrine of equality. That doctrine will take account of all the natural inequalities. It will play no tricks with nature. It will march with her all the way. Society will still have its eminences. Man will not be defrauded of his upward look. But the eminences will be true ones. Intellect, gifts, moral worth, achievement—all will get their due. There will be room for them, made more ample by the carting away of paste-board dignities. But what, in this arrangement, will be the equality to be sought for? It will be the equality in the means of happiness, in the means of human well-being. For that we need no sameness of rank, or position, or possession. Why cannot we here follow nature? Is not the family the living symbol of all society needs? In a well-ordered household the father is never in the same position as his child. He carries more money in his pocket. He has an authority which the child has not. He lives a larger life. But the father's solicitude is that the child, in its way, shall be as happy as himself; if

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possible, more so. There is to be an equality of well-being. While the parents have a crust, it is the child's. The same roof covers them. The family purse is shared amongst them. The smallest member shall know no want while the parental pocket has sixpence in it.

Society, as we now have it, is, of course, an infinitely more complex affair than a single household. In the one we deal with units, all well known and closely related to each other. In the other we deal with millions, mostly unknown and unrelated. Unrelated, did we say? But we are feeling for the relation, and are already finding its tie upon us. We are discovering our essential kinship—discovering that we cannot be well, be happy, unless the whole of us is happy and well. This does not mean, let us once more repeat, that everybody is to be as everybody else. Well-being does not demand that; it demands the contrary. What it does mean is such an arrangement of conditions, such a management of the national resources as shall secure to every man, woman and child of the community a full, a wholesome and a joyous life. That is within the reach of this nation; and the only politics worth following are the politics that work towards it.

## XXV

### THE CITY

ONE of the things the modern man, the world over, takes especial pride in, is the size of his premier cities. When the Londoner meets the New Yorker or the Berliner it is with an easy sense of superiority. Let the one talk of his sky-scrappers, or the other of his *Unter den Linden*, the Britisher feels always that he has the pull. He puts his thumb into his waistcoat and quotes the latest figures. "The population of London, sir, is ——," and he gives the number of millions. What national or civic pretension can stand against that? Close on this international boasting comes the local. Glasgow lifts its heel against Liverpool; the newly-aggrandised Birmingham takes down the conceit of Manchester. This glorying in the mere size of your swarm is, when we come to think of it, a singular spectacle; and one it is time we looked into a little more closely. What if, after all, this talk should turn out to be the praise of a disease; as if a man should pride himself on the bigness of his wen? Is the population figure the one criterion of a city? You could reduplicate Athens and Jerusalem several times over in Chicago; but does that settle the question of their fame? One remembers here that remark



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of Renan: "What is the whole of America beside a ray of that infinite glory with which a city of the second or third order—Florence, Pisa, Siena, Perugia—shines in Italy?"

The city is at once the glory and the disgrace of our civilisation. It has been the centre and home of intelligence, and yet it has grown without intelligence. It has come about no one knows or cares how. Now that we are beginning to ask questions about it, we begin to perceive that its problem is too big for us. We have allowed a monster to develop which threatens to devour us. We do not forget here our debt to the city. It has been the mother and the nurse of liberty. Its rise, in the midst of mediæval Europe, meant the curbing of feudalism, the growth of the middle class, the assertion of the plain man's rights, the development of commerce and the arts, the enormous enhancement which co-operation and intimate association bring to the sum of human power. With all this in our minds—and the story of it has been told us in a thousand histories—we have let the city grow, and rejoiced in its growth. It could hardly be too big for us, or big enough. But now some other questions concerning it are coming up, which wait to be answered.

We note, to begin with, the simple point that nothing grows in a city. It is in itself an attack upon nature. As it advances, all the beautiful things wither and die. We watch the process in a suburb. The clump of old oaks we used to pass in our morning walk has gone; the green meadow has become a brickyard; the thrushes, the blackbirds we used to hear have disappeared; the brook is covered in;

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the greenery over which the eye ranged is replaced by lines of brick and mortar. There is a different taste in the air. The country has been annexed by the city, and has died in the process. The city, we say, is the place where nothing grows. The things by which man lives—his cattle, his corn, his wine, his oil—have here no place to produce themselves. You can store them in the city, but its soil does not yield them. Even if it had room for their growth, its air, become fouled and noisome, would hardly feed them. And what of man who lives here? He, too, needs sun and air and wide spaces, for he also is a part of nature. Where flowers do not flourish, can he flourish? Look at the size and colour of our slum dwellers; compare them with our fishermen, with our highlanders, with the cowboy of the prairies, and you get the answer. The really strong men of the city are the well-to-do, who were most likely born in the country, who have their homes in it, to which they rush when work is over, and who have long holidays by mountain and by sea. The dweller who cannot secure these escapes dwindles, as do his children after him.

These are physical results. Note now some moral ones. The ruthlessness of the city is perhaps nowhere more shown than in the shrinkage it produces in human values. We esteem each other so much less there than anywhere else. In the small town, in the village, every individual counts for something, for all he is worth. You greet the village policeman, the roadside worker, and discover how interesting they are. Who thinks of greeting a policeman or his

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fellow-passenger in Fleet Street? You meet a man on your travels in Switzerland or in Norway. You spend three weeks in his company and realise how many ties there are between you. If he came afterward to your neighbourhood in the country you would be friends for life. He lives in London, within a mile of you, and therefore you are no more to each other. The village shoemaker dies and the whole community is moved. Everybody knew him. A thousand shoemakers may drop out in London, and London does not turn a hair.

If that were all, it would be something. But it is only the beginning. The great city is to tens of thousands the grave of character. It has no collective moral sense; on the contrary, it breeds an atmosphere which is poisonous to the moral sense. The lads and young women who come up to it from country homes to try their fortunes find themselves free in it—to go to their ruin by any one of the short cuts which open before them. The city, which cannot grow trees, or corn, or any sweet nature product, has a carefully made soil for the rearing of every kind of vice. It has its vast army of young womanhood dedicated to vice. It could populate a big town with residents whose whole occupation is that of knavery, swindling and scoundrelism of every kind. Our mining inspectors, our railway authorities give us figures every year of the number of deaths and casualties incurred in these dangerous labour fields. What we do not get; what we are, so far, quite careless of getting, are the numbers of moral deaths, of the maimings and wreckings of character, of all that makes life high and

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noble, that come about year by year, aye, and night by night, in the death-traps and miasma-swamps of the city.

There is another side to the problem of the city, the most difficult of all, and where we seem farthest from a solution. It is the problem of poverty, of destitution. We have to-day any number of fine brains and brave hearts at work on this subject. But do we think the changes recommended by our present reformers are going to solve our poverty problem? Be sure we have not fathomed this subject by being pro-workhouse or anti-workhouse; by being pro-guardian or anti-guardian. We are bold to say that the production of our worst, our hopeless classes, our thieves, prostitutes, drunkards, incapables, is, more than anything else, the result of our aggregation in huge cities, and till we have remedied that we have remedied nothing.

Let us think a little of what this means. To take London: we have the population of a large town added to its numbers every year. Some of these are born in it; the rest pour in from every quarter of the country—of the earth. On what terms do these immigrants come? Their arrival is the addition to a fellowship, and a strange fellowship truly. When we admit a new member to a society, a club, a church, still more a family circle, we have a great exchange of give and take. All the sentiments, the values, the loyalties that enrich life come into play. The new-comer enters on engagements towards his new comrades; they relate themselves in a similar way to him. And in the old citizenship of an earlier period something like this obtained with every

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outsider who presented himself to the township. He was admitted on terms. He became responsible to the city and the city to him. And in many parts of the world this still obtains. Settle in a Continental town and you find you are somebody. The police look after you, get your name and address, your intentions. You must get your *permis de séjour*; must pass through various other ordeals if you would claim full citizenship. The thing, to the well-placed Englishman, seems irksome, ludicrous. But, after all, it is something to be looked after, even by the police. You are not a stone that has rolled, a straw that has blown into the place by accident. You are, at least, recognised for human.

But the multitudes who tramp into London, what of them? Yes, they are quite at liberty to tramp in there; nobody will prevent them, will ask them any question. They are at perfect liberty to starve there; to eat out their hearts in its horrible solitude; to get sick and die there; to go to the devil there in any way they choose. There is absolute liberty for it all; nobody, or next to nobody, will know or care anything about it. This is the fellowship of London as at present organised. We have been pitiful, eloquent, furious, about American slavery, and it has been abolished. But the slave at least had some value. Somebody was interested in him, even if it was only a business interest. In London that slave would have been free; free to sleep on the Embankment, to walk the streets till he dropped; free, but worth nothing to anybody; free to put himself into the river, which at least would take care of him, in its own way.

## The City

Freedom, we say, was bred in the city, but is this the freedom we want, or are contented with? There is a line beyond which liberty becomes a curse, a colossal selfishness, an inhuman neglect. We know that when we keep a child under the care of its nurse ; it must not be free to lose itself, to poison itself, to fall downstairs. We recognise this in all our family relationships. We are not free to hurt each other, to neglect each other. Is it not time we extended the view here, and realised that no human association, big or little, should be free of the care of its members, of its responsibilities towards them? In the true human condition there will be, in every association of peoples, the exhaling of the loves, the affections, the sense of duty one towards another, which form the proper atmosphere of souls. It is the city, by its abnormal size, by its overwhelming, unrestricted inrush of new members, that has killed all this. And in that fact lies the condemnation of the city as it now is.

But how to remedy things? We shall not remedy them assuredly till the common-sense, and still more the conscience, of the community has been awakened and made to study the facts as they are. We have to unlearn our city pride. We have to learn instead that the city is a monster that has to be tamed and brought under. We have to learn that a community, to be really human, must be kept to human conditions ; and one of these is a manageable size. Was not Plato right when, in his ideal republic, he restricted the city to a given number of inhabitants, insisting that a fresh colony should be founded when the number

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was exceeded? We must diminish London if we are to reform it. How, is a difficult question, but when the general mind is aroused upon it there will be ways and means. The question of population, of the birth-rate, comes in, but that we cannot now touch. For another thing, transit for people and for goods will have to be quickened and cheapened to a degree which will permit the toiler to live in the country while working in the city. And we look for the time when the transmission of power, electric and other, will enable the country to do as efficient work, in all kinds, as the city.

Meanwhile the city, as it is, will have to be reorganised. We look for a social machinery in it so efficient, so widespread, so minutely ramified, as shall take into its care every member of the vast family therein gathered. May we not entertain here a new conception of the Church? Of a Church which, instead of occupying itself with theologic squabbles, with the routine of sermon-making, with the splitting up into endless divisions, should resolve itself into the one supreme agency for bringing these vast, shepherdless hordes into a true mutual relationship? These things are far from us as yet. But they are the questions of the day, and they will allow us no peace till we have found some means of getting them answered.



## XXVI

### DOING WITHOUT

ARISTOTLE, in the "Rhetoric," has an illuminating passage on the Greek idea of happiness. Says he: "The constituent parts of happiness are nobility, many and excellent friends, wealth, a goodly and numerous family, and a happy old age; also such physical excellencies as health, beauty, strength, stature and athletic power, and finally fame, honour, good fortune and virtue." This will doubtless strike most of us as a rather large order. If we cannot be happy without all these things, most of us are doomed to be miserable. Our philosopher, of course, does not quite mean that. He names these things as each tending to produce happiness. At the same time, the mention of them sets us thinking on what are the real essentials of a happy life. As soon as we start out on the quest one of the first things we meet is nature's law of doing without. We are to be happy without things, if happy at all. It is not simply that we can cultivate an art of doing without. Nature imposes it upon us as one of her inevitable processes. She is perpetually adding to us and perpetually taking from us. And the art of life, so far as we can make

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life an art, is that of correctly interpreting this process and accommodating ourselves to it.

Our teaching here begins early, and it goes on all the time. The child's weaning is one of its first lessons, a lesson it does not like. What a most unkind world it has come into ! But the process continues. Youth and manhood are spent in dropping one prop after another ; parental assistance, home discipline, all manner of agreeable illusions. As age comes on there is a shedding of things as of leaves from the trees in autumn. The old strength, the old friends and associates, the old places of prominence and power one by one fall away. It is an incessant stripping, as though the road were beset by robbers. And yet, strange to say, that is not the verdict which our experience passes on the process. It is only a part of the fact, and the least part. The other part is that nature takes away in order to impart. She is pressed for space, and has to turn out the old apparatus and the old products in order to make room for new ones.

But she impresses on us the fact that in this dropping of things she is endeavouring always for progress. We carry in our bodies the fragments of her discarded tools. Physiologists find in us the remnants of gills. Our caudal vertebræ are the remnants of tails. We do without these appendages now. We are none the worse for their loss. The loss is part of our progress. We are trying now to fly. We are endeavouring after wings. When we are free of the air we shall have less use for legs, and their importance will diminish accordingly. Who knows what the human form may become in the process of evolution ; what present

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usages will fall into desuetude? But we may rest here on nature's promise, that what she takes away will be replaced by something better.

And this view of things, which our own bodies furnish, is confirmed by all we see in the general movement of the world. The thing is true not only of our bodies but of our mind and soul. Here also there is a continual taking away, followed by an immediate replacement of something better. Take, as illustration, what is happening in the sphere of religion. In the lifetime of many of us there has taken place a huge displacement of what our fathers regarded as necessary to its stability and furtherance. They regarded the Church as somewhat in the position in which the ancients regarded the world—as in need of an elaborate machinery of under-propping. This huge planet must have something substantial to rest upon. And so the old world imagined it as standing on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and so on. To-day we know it as swinging in empty space, upheld solely by forces that are invisible. The Church in like manner must be propped. Roman Catholic Christianity supplied it with an infallible Pope. Protestantism, over large areas, gave it a State Establishment—something solid and substantial. In addition it must have an infallible Scripture, a carefully drawn-out creed, an elaborate scheme of divinity. To-day we see one after another of these underpinnings being taken away. Protestantism does without the Pope. Nonconformists do without Establishment. With cultivated Christians an inerrant Scripture has gone. The creeds are rending and sagging.

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Instead of foundations they are being considered as incumbrances. Religion is learning to do without these things. The Church, like the planet it lives in, will soon find itself as a body swinging in the open ether, upheld in an infinitely firmer way by the invisible forces of the spiritual realm. Religion is, in fact, learning to fly instead of to crawl. As the material body is doing without gills and tails, so the spiritual body is doing without its mediæval supports, and is not the worse therefor, but the better.

In the religious life there is another kind of "doing without," which some of us would do well to learn. In the correspondence of the present writer no letters are more frequent than those which demand, as a condition of faith, an explanation of the government of this universe. "How," people ask, "are we to believe in a good God in presence of the miseries and catastrophes which overwhelm our fellows? Look at the famines, the slaughterings, the condition of the poor, circumstanced, many of them, in a way which makes virtue impossible; look at the prosperity of evil men, the grabbers, the impostors! Where is the evidence in all this of a moral law, of a Divine ordering of things?" Who has the answer to all this? Certainly we have not. But life has taught us a few things, and one of them is to do without an answer. Is it our business to know everything before we do anything? Is it our business on this planet to transform ourselves into a note of universal interrogation? Is it the function of the private soldier, instead of obeying orders, to do nothing but criticise the commander-in-chief and the conduct of the cam-

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paign ? Is it not true that, as Lamartine puts it, " he who believes nothing will do nothing ? " Is not the curve of life too vast for us to pronounce on it from our present view-point ? Is not faith's agnosticism a saner attitude ? We had better for the present respect heaven's reticence on these points, and do without the explanation until it is forthcoming. Till that appears it is enough for us to know that Christianity, the noblest rule of life that this world has seen, was founded on suffering and death ; that its note of triumphant faith was uttered in presence of the Cross and the grave. And this further, that humble faith, in the results it produces in the soul, is its own sufficient vindication.

"Doing without," as one of the arts of life, has any number of practical applications, with some of which we may now concern ourselves. We began by quoting Aristotle's enumeration of the conditions of happiness. We none of us have all of them ; some of us have very few. What is, however, to be noted here is the fact, so much overlooked, that the absence of a thing does not imply that the place it should occupy in us is a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum. The place of the good we do not possess is always occupied by something else, and that something very often a better. Take, for instance, the question of luxuries. Professor Marshall computes that in England 100 millions annually are spent by the working classes, and 400 millions by the rest of the population, " in ways that do little or nothing towards making life nobler or truly happier." To do without these things would mean, what ? Vacuity ? Far otherwise. It would

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be to fill life with real satisfactions. When the soul does without vanities it straightway calls for other things which are not vanities. In the *Fioretti* of St. Francis there is a story of "Brother Juniper." Says he, "When carnal desires come I occupy myself in holy meditation and holy desires, and so when evil suggestions knock at the heart, I answer, 'Be gone, for the house is already full, and can hold no more guests.'"

The laws of the soul are such, so beneficent and divinely framed, that we are often fullest when we are apparently emptiest. Thus it is that the man who has nothing possesses all. The Greek philosopher speaks of physical strength, beauty, riches, honour, as ingredients of the happy life. And there are people with no physical strength, no beauty, no wealth, who have lain for years on a sick-bed, yet who daily praise God for His goodness to them. So wonderful is the soul's structure that it has found joy when the body was burning alive. So it is with Fructuosus in the Valerian persecution, and with the Spanish Bishop of Tarragona, who, when in the flames, called to his friends, "The kindness of the Lord can never fail, nor His promise here or hereafter. This which you see is only the weakness of an hour." It is a long leap from the ancient martyrs to the pages of Dickens, yet our English artist in character can be cited with them as entirely true to the soul's way of things. Take that scene in "David Copperfield" where he pictures Traddles in the days of his poverty, with his young wife, "the dearest girl in all the world," as trudging gleefully in the West-end streets, gloating

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over the splendours displayed in the shops, all of which they could do without, and yet be entirely happy ! It is a true picture. Because they had not these things were they empty ? Was not their place filled with their mutual affection, their industry, their courage, their hope ? Why even to desire a thing is often so much better than to have it. The desire is at least a stimulant. The possession is so often a disappointment.

To learn to do without is, in this rough world of ours, often the condition of brave and effective work. The teacher who is bent on gaining or securing the world's applause, and fortune by means of it, will not have much of value to offer. It is only when we have come to value truth for its own sake ; when we are careless of pomp and show, when we have learned the secret of our personal nothingness, that we can afford to speak plainly. Walt Whitman, living in his boathouse, could say all his mind to his dollar-hunting countrymen. They could neither make him nor mar him. Said Kepler on finishing his work on planetary motion : " I have written my book. It will be read, whether by the present age or posterity matters little. It can wait for its readers. Has not God waited six thousand years for me to contemplate His works ? " Milton in Italy found Galileo " a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." These men could do without contemporary fame, without liberty even. They could not do without truth.

A time comes when we shall have to do without our bodies. What happens then ? We will content our-



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selves here with two testimonies, both from reputed unbelievers. Says Renan, speaking of the Port Royalists : " Sister Marie Claire, exclaiming ' Victory ! ' with her last breath, may have been sustained by a faith which is no longer ours ; . . . but she set forth the nature of the spirit by an argument superior to all those of Descartes, and, in showing us the soul quitting the body as a ripe fruit drops from its stalk, she taught us not to pronounce too lightly on the limits of its destiny." And next Benjamin Constant, at the deathbed of his friend Mme. Talma. Finding her retaining all her mind and soul, though her bodily organs were almost destroyed, he asks : " Why should death, which is only the completion of this feebleness, destroy the soul which that feebleness had not impaired ? " Why indeed ? The whole process of life, as we have seen, is a process of shedding things, of doing without, but always with a view to filling their place with something better. And it is precisely this process which the apostolic faith proclaims as to be carried on at the final scene ; when we are unclothed, not to stand naked, but to " be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life."

## XXVII

### DOING WITH

THE chapter on "Doing Without" seems to require a sequel. Under that title we discussed nature's habit of lending us things of which she later dispossesses us; and tried to show how her operation here, on the large and the small scale, was really a furtherance and not a deprivation. It is a natural continuation of the theme to take up its other side, that of doing with. We are stripped of things we once had; we go naked of much that other people enjoy. To adjust ourselves happily to these conditions is part of our problem. But there is another part, even more important, and that is the true appreciation and the right handling of what, here and now, is actually ours. Are any of us really poor? Well, the least dowered of us is possessed of something, and the whole question depends upon what we are doing with that something.

It is curious—an illustration of the wildly devious ways of thinking our forbears have pursued—that we should need to assert at the outset that what we now have is a good thing, a thing to be valued and enjoyed. Yet mediæval theology has strenuously denied this, and the denial is still defended by many religionists of our day. It is held as worldly to think

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well of our present life, and of what it brings us. Says the great Catholic doctor, Thomas Aquinas, "Man stands between the goods of this world and those of another. He who would possess the latter must eschew the former. He cannot have both." That is the doctrine of asceticism, a doctrine which regards morality as consisting entirely in a time-difference, the difference between now and then; which makes it an entirely holy thing to enjoy life in heaven, and quite the reverse to enjoy it here on earth. In obedience to this doctrine we have men crippling their faculties of body and mind by voluntary starvation; a Liguori striving for sainthood by choosing for his dwelling-place a horrible room, without light or warmth, and living on scraps which we should not give to a hog. It is a curious philosophy, one which nature repudiates with her utmost emphasis. If enjoyment is good in heaven it is good anywhere. If living fountains, trees of precious fruits, and streets of shining gold are good in the New Jerusalem, be sure they are good outside it. Is the caterpillar, because it is to be a butterfly, to despise its present existence? It will surely be a better butterfly for being a good and well-nourished caterpillar. To starve itself in the one state will in no wise help, but grievously hinder it in the other. No caterpillar acts like that. It is wiser than the ascetics. This principle of postponement is exactly that of a man who abstains rigorously from his liquor—for a time, in order that he may drink to the full later on.

We are here and now in order to do our best with here and now. What you have, at this moment, is

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something for you to work upon, and everything depends on how you work it. All things, says old Epictetus, have two handles, and it is for you to decide which you will take hold of them by, the right one or the wrong one. Your world is there around you, the world of your circumstances, dumbly expectant as to how you will deal with it. It is crammed with treasures; the question is whether you have the keys. For ages the North American Indians had roamed that vast continent, and for the ages during their occupancy it remained pretty much what it was. Another race by and by appears—our British race—and out of these same materials constructs an amazing civilisation. But have our Americans done all there is to be done with America? The people of the future, a people better equipped in body, mind, and soul, will produce from these same materials an existence as much richer than theirs as theirs is superior to that of the Indian. The hidden treasures still wait for the men with the keys.

And these treasures; how many of them do *we* possess? "Few enough," you say. "My home is a four-roomed cottage; what a contrast to the lordly pleasure-houses I read of! I work for a fixed wage, a trifling amount, below the notice of the income-tax collector; and here, in this city, to mock my poverty, are millionaires, whose pockets bulge with money. I have not a yard of land to call my own; and yonder stretch the other man's broad acres. Do I not well to be discontented?" Well, we are working for a better state of things, in which some of these inequalities will be redressed. But meanwhile, do not for

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heaven's sake overlook what you actually possess. After all, is the difference so very great between you and your lordling? The real things that make life worth having are, when you come to think of it, primarily those which you and he have in common. What would be the value of his acres and his millions if he were born without ears, or without eyes; or if he were cut off from human fellowship; from wife and home? Or if he had no aspirations, no great inward experiences, no soul? It is these things that make life, and you have them all. And as to possessions; what at the bottom *is* possession? Is there anything more, anything better in it, than to know, to use, to enjoy? A man may own all the early editions of Shakespeare—and never open them. Does he possess his Shakespeare in a way comparable to the lover-student who knows his poet by heart? And the broad acres; is the fee simple of these everything? As you stroll through the fields on a fine spring morning, and quaff the air, and note the flowers and the greening trees, and find your whole soul expanding with the new life of the world, are you not in the fullest sense a possessor? The landless Wordsworth, setting out from his humble cottage on that "first mild day of March, each moment sweeter than before," does he not own the landscape more deeply and intrinsically than by any process of legal conveyance? Hear him:—

Love, now a universal birth,  
From heart to heart is stealing,  
From earth to man, from man to earth;  
It is the hour of feeling.

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The world, on that spring morning, was God's gift to him. No parchment could confer on him what he had ; no, nor take it away. And if you, too, bring an open eye and a cleansed heart to the matter, there will be for you also a like inalienable possession. We can hardly here strike a better temper than that which Renan ascribes to himself and his beloved Francis of Assisi. "Like the patriarch of Assisi, I have lived in the world . . . as a mere tenant, if I may say so. Without having possessed anything of our own, we both found ourselves wealthy. God gave us the usufruct of the universe, and we have been contented to enjoy without possession."

So much for our life out of doors. Let us turn now to our life indoors. Of all the world-values there are none so precious as those contained in our human relations. Here in your home there is a heaven for you, if you are wise ; a hell, if you are foolish. This fellowship, of husband and wife, of parents and children, is the centre of your greatest possibilities. Money cannot create it, though often it may mar it. Here is the field of all others for our doing with. You can, of course, imagine a better field. You think of ideal personalities and compare them discontentedly with those around you. These familiar forms, that are with you every morning, and all day, how you burn to reconstruct them ! Their faults are so patent, their imperfections loom so large. But what here are you looking at ? Many of us in the management, or rather mismanagement, of our domestic life are like miners who, working at a gold reef, should direct their whole attention to the sand, rubble, bare rock

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they meet there ; turning them over and over, cursing their unproductiveness, and leaving untouched the precious metal that is there waiting for an eye and a hand. For, be sure, every one of your circle is a gold reef. The rubble is there doubtless, and the bare rock. But your fortune is in the gold. Your business is to aim at that, and at nothing else. And your gold-finder is love. First Corinthians, chapter thirteen, is the charter of the home, its philosopher's stone that turns all into gold. Not a palatial building, not fine furniture, not Rembrandt paintings, but the love that hopeth all things, beareth all things, suffereth long and is kind—here is your magic key that every day shall, in its humble precincts, unlock new treasure-chambers.

Then there is what we are accustomed to call life's darker side ; its pains and penalties, its rebuffs of circumstance, its disappointments ; the neglects of friends, the attacks of foes. What are you doing with all that ? St. Bernard was sure, and we may be also, that nothing can really hurt us, unless we allow it to hurt us. The only real enemy is ourself. Conquer there and you conquer everywhere. We are to take these things as part of life's rough yet glorious game ; as furnishing the arena where our soul is to win its spurs. Here is a story of St. Vincent de Paul to show us how a disciplined heart may deal with the world at its worst. When he was of the French Royal Council a certain duchess asked the Queen (Anne of Austria) to make her son a bishop. The Queen assented. Vincent, hearing of it, told her that the young man was full of the worst



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vices, and that his election would be a gross scandal. The name of the aspirant was accordingly withdrawn. The enraged duchess, meeting the saint, threw at him a stool, and wounded him on the forehead. A friend of his, seeing the blood flowing, wanted to rush in and avenge him. Vincent forbade him, saying, with a smile, "Is it not a fine thing to see how far the love of a mother for her son will go?" Here, in a flash, the Christian temper had solved two problems—how to be honest in the face of corruption, and how to be forgiving in the face of insult. Shall we grumble at a world whose worst assaults are, after all, simply opportunities for winning inner victories? We may side here with the whimsical, daring remark of Professor James: "We need not object to the presence of the devil, provided we have always our foot on his neck."

In pleading thus for things as they are do not let us be misinterpreted. This is not an argument for fatalism, for a tame acquiescence. Our thought here is throughout conditioned by one conception—namely, that things as they are contain in themselves things as they may be. The wrongness of our world lies in our lack of perception, in our gross blunders in interpretation. The life-material by which we are surrounded is good, is of the best. What we have been doing with it is the question. When society has purged its vision, and can see straight, we shall have some new arrangements of that material, quite new ways of handling it. If, as we have urged, wealth is no passport to life's best things, this does not mean that poverty is a passport. The extreme form of it

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which modern civilisation has produced is a hindrance, which has to be removed. To have allowed it at all is the sign of our failure to deal properly with the world's resources. Here, on this earth, if we had sense to see it, is room for us all—aye, for a well-dowered all, where every man and woman of us may partake plentifully of the feast nature has provided, and know the full joy and splendour of living. We are as yet a long way from that consummation, from doing with our world as God means we should. We have to-day any number of sciences, some in an advanced stage. The one science we need, and which is yet in its first infancy, is the science of sane living.

## XXVIII

### SPRING CLEANING

THERE is more in spring cleaning than meets the eye. This is not to be an essay on domestic economy, on which the present writer makes no claim to be a proficient. As a mere man, with some years of domesticity behind him, he has, of course, gone through the annual crisis, and knows the sensations proper to it. It is a time when his sex knows its inferiority. Man, at this period, is in the hands of his women folk, and shows there as a rather poor figure. His protests, his recalcitrations, vehement, yet so entirely fruitless, prove what a futile creature he is when the other side chooses to assert itself. That he can see no reason for this ruthless upsetting shows what he is worth as an observer. If he had eyes in his head, would he not see the disgraceful condition of carpets and curtains, of ceilings and wall-papers? The man is incorrigible. Left to himself, he would sit year in and year out in his smoke-begrimed den, blissfully unaware of the abominable state to which he has reduced it. It is good for him that, once in a while, he should be taught his place. Let this be said for him, that, as a rule, he takes his lesson fairly well. He is aware of his utter helplessness, and the knowledge is salutary. Though he knows not what his next meal may bring forth, and whether

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he will sleep in his bed or on his doorstep, he survives his ordeal. His language at times may be picturesque, his view of life approximate to that of Schopenhauer ; but at the end, when the business is through, and the goddesses of his hearth ask him triumphantly whether " he does not think that once more he has a place fit to live in," he is acquiescent, even joyful. Back in his snugger, with the roar of battle hushed, and the promise of peace for another twelve months, he revises his philosophy, and is prepared, with reservations, to subscribe the Leibnitzian doctrine that all is for the best, in the best of possible worlds.

We will not discuss the feminine side of the matter, which probably is (we have not inquired) that the man in this business is let off far too easily. Can he not go to his club, or his golf, or have a jovial week-end at the seaside, while the wife is in the thick of all this dust and turmoil ? That is worth his consideration. Martin Luther, who married a wife and learned from her, be sure, more than all the schools could teach him, had some inkling of this. It was from his Kate, doubtless, he got these brave words about her work : " What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God." And this : " It looks like a great thing when a monk renounces everything and goes into a cloister, carries on a life of asceticism ; fasts, watches, prays, &c. On the other hand, it looks like a small thing when a maid works and cleans and does other housework. But because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of

## Spring Cleaning

all monks and nuns." Bravo, Luther ! That vindication of woman's work was one of the best sides of your Reformation !

But, as we hinted at the beginning, this business goes deeper than domesticity. There is a principle in it worth our best study. The principle seems to be that the world's daily work is not enough to keep the world in order ; that there is something left undone, a something which, in the end, becomes a vast accumulation of defect. The faint deviation from the straight line, continued from day to day, lands us finally at quite a distance from that line, and demands an heroic attempt at return. The situation becomes acute, until a point is reached which demands that one's energies shall be turned from the thousand other things which occupy them, and concentrated upon this state of affairs, and its remedy. The application here is clearly wider than to carpets and dusty corners. It spreads over all life, and has had a good deal to do with the making of history.

Our modern civilisation has produced some interesting results. Amongst other things it has made fashionable, and even necessary, a new type of spring cleaning : that, namely, of the body. Thousands of people, with apparently nothing better to do, habitually over-eat and over-drink themselves. They breakfast on three or four courses, lunch on still more courses, while dinner is a banquet to which these earlier meals serve only as introduction. With the eatables are wines, spirits, liqueurs. Under this treatment the overloaded physique becomes clogged to the breaking-down point, and our fashionable rushes

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off to Vichy, to Carlsbad, to Wiesbaden, for what he calls his "cure." His life is spent in eating himself into disease, and then drenching and dieting himself out of it. It is possible that by diligent cultivation of this aspect of our civilisation we may in time reach the standard of old Rome, where, in the great houses, a vomitorium formed part of the domestic arrangement—placed within easy reach of the dining-table. Do we not want here a spring cleaning such as Wiesbaden and its rivals are unable to supply ; one, namely, that shall sweep out, as with a torrent's rush, the whole theory of life on which these habits are founded, and clear the way for one which makes our eating and drinking, instead of an animalism more or less refined, into an instrument of health and of noble living?

Amongst the fashionable circles who make the fortune of the Continental "cures" there is a curiously analogous spring cleaning process in their spiritual affairs. In Catholic society you hear of worldlings who occasionally "go into retreat," in order, as the phrase is, "to make their soul." Lent is a kind of spiritual Carlsbad. Its devotions are a sort of medicinal waters, wherewith to wash off from overloaded consciences accumulations which have become burdensome, and to restore to the jaded appetite its vanished freshness. At this season we read that ladies of the gayest circles in Paris flock to the exhortations of the severest and most ascetic preachers. Their soul needs a contrast, and here they get it. But all this is entirely on the Carlsbad principle. The "cure" is taken not as a new habit of life, but as a means of renewing, with fresh zest, the old one. When Lent is over,

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everybody will be gayer than ever. A mad world, truly, my masters.

There are spring cleanings, however, which are not of this order. They happen in nature's great household, and she manages them in her own way. During the closing scenes of the Russo-Turkish war, a singular fortune brought the present writer into the little town of Bourgaz, at the foot of the Balkans, then occupied by Russian troops. The streets were a foot deep in mud. Remarking on this to the British Consul, the latter said: "Ah, they never clean them. They wait for the snow melting in the spring. Then there is a flood, which sweeps it all away." Nature here took a hand in the spring cleaning by a method rough but efficacious. She seems to have had a way of doing that from the beginning. She goes on quietly, through comfortable æons, letting her dinosaurs, her ichthyosaurians, her "monsters of the prime," crawl over and possess the world until they have finished their work, whatever it was, and she has no more use for them. Then suddenly this vigorous housewife takes broom in hand—and there is an end of our dinosaurs.

When we emerge from geology into history we find the same thing. The world, or some given part of it—a nation, a church—goes on diverging, bit by bit, from its straight line; goes on accumulating dirt and dust which dim its brightness and threaten to bury it altogether. Then, somewhere above, the snow melts, the torrent comes down, and makes a clean sweep. In the political sphere something like this happened in England in the seventeenth century,



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and in France in the eighteenth. There may be more of these happenings to follow. It seems as if there were one due in China. In the present day, here in the West, we are apt to regard these old-time methods as a little too drastic. We dislike floods, and for our street cleansings have provided instead a whole apparatus of brooms and watercarts. But as we observe the present state of our political roads and by-streets the suspicion grows on us that these instruments, with all their parade of efficiency, are not quite up to their work. We see here and there ugly accumulations, which resist our watercart, and, spite of it, are choking the road. Here in England, to speak out plainly, does not our political region need a spring cleaning? We are supposed to be under democratic Government. What a pathetic delusion! Go five miles out of any English town and you have stepped from democracy into feudalism, from the twentieth to the fourteenth century. You will find the countryside under the thumb of landlordism and clericalism; its judicial bench, manned by those powers, sending a poor woman to gaol for the crime of not having enough to feed her children. Or go from the country to the city, to your central Government. On your Treasury bench you have men pledged to progress. But behind that bench you see permanent departments—where the actual governing is done—stuffed with reactionaries, wedded fast to the feudal ideas. You have there your Admiralty Board, in closest touch with the great war interests, who prepare the estimates you are to pay for, sure that they will be carried, if not by Liberal, then by Tory votes. You have your Board of Educa-

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tion, assiduously carrying out a clerical Education Act, framed largely by these said officials, and your Board of Agriculture, devoting its energies to the thwarting of your attempts to bring back the people to the land. It is a pretty spectacle as it stands, but the joke may be carried too far. Some day—there are signs of spring already—there will be a snow-melting on the hills, when it will be time for functionaries of this order, and for the whole system they represent, to save themselves from the rush of the torrent.

Spring cleaning, where old buildings are concerned, is manifestly a dangerous operation. It is apt to go so much farther than you first intended. You begin with your pail and brush, with a little plastering and tinkering here and there, to discover that something quite different from whitewash is required; that the building is rotten to the foundation, and will have to come down. When Luther started on his affair with Rome he had no idea of being a revolutionary. He thought simply of doing a little brush and spade work; of clearing away some of the rubbish at the back of the venerable building in which he had been brought up. He started on indulgences, against certain abuses in the Church order. The witty pontiff at the Vatican, when he heard of him, said, "Doubtless the fellow will come to his senses when he has slept off his wine." Neither Leo X. nor Luther had the faintest notion of what was coming; that the stir at Wittenberg was to be like the cutting of the silver cord at a launching; when the touch of a lady's hand sets in motion a twenty-thousand-ton leviathan. Even now, at the distance of well-nigh four centuries,

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we have not fully realised what the Reformation was to effect in the sphere of religion. We are still in the early stages of the movement; a movement whose goal is the absolute freedom of the mind in its quest for truth. Humanity, and the religion of humanity, will fearlessly pursue that path, assured that along it no spiritual value will be lost, that the soul's treasures will, in the progress, be endlessly added to; that "mind and heart, according well, shall make one music as before, but vaster."

But Protestantism, if it is to keep its place in the world, will have to be something more than a formula of mental liberty. We are suffering to-day from a grievous clogging of our interior life. The soul's arteries are blocked with material accumulations, and its pulse throbs feebly. In some respects our civilisation resembles that of the old world, to which Christianity, in its glorious freshness, came as a great spring cleaning. Upon a faint and thirsty world that current of noblest feeling came as an infinite refreshment, cool, sparkling, fresh from the very river of God. That stream still flows. What is needed is that we get back to it. Some of us are badly in need of an inner spring cleaning. And that not on the Carlsbad principle—as a mere change of dissipations—but as the purifying and renewing of our life. Back from our vapid pleasurings, from our mad hunt for things not worth the chase, back to the hills where the fountains rise, where the view opens on infinity, and we see things *sub specie æternitatis*; to the heights where life is felt as holy, where God is known as our one, our all-sufficing and everlasting possession.

## XXIX

### FIGHTING

HOBBS, of the "Leviathan," declared that war was man's natural condition. Peace was an interlude in which he prepared for further conflicts. The present condition of things, if appearances are to count, would go far towards proving his contention. Hobbes has been dead these two hundred years and more, and the world is fuller than ever of soldiers and of all the apparatus of war. Australia, one of the newest States, the latest fruit of civilisation, has just decreed the military training of her citizens, and there is a strong movement in England for the same object. The war budgets of Europe absorb an ever increasing proportion of her income. Social schemes may wait; the poor may starve and perish of want; but armaments cannot wait. Higher and ever higher mounts the colossal total, each demand preparing the way for one still higher. What is the meaning of it all, and is it to last for ever?

Let us be sure of one thing. Hobbes was right in a way. Man *is* a fighting animal; was, and always will be. His limbs, his senses, his brain, his instincts,

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are all made for that. He is a centre of force, and he will use his force, an ever-growing force, to the end of time. His business is a contest; his pleasures are contests. Has it occurred to us that all our games are battles? Out of doors our cricket, our football, our tennis; indoors our chess, our bridge, our billiards are all the setting of our powers against those of our neighbour. And politics are a never-ceasing fight. The universe itself lives by struggle. It is motion against inertia, the central heat waging its campaign against the death-dealing cold. Evolution is an eternal struggle. The vegetable, the animal world bear the scars of it in every blade of grass, in every muscle and tendon. Says Fiske: "Battles far more deadly than those of Gettysburg or Gravelotte have been incessantly waged on every square mile of the earth's life-bearing surface since life first began." Our very blood is a battlefield, where phagocytes fight for us against hosts of intruding germs. The one question here is not whether we shall go on fighting; it is against whom or what shall we fight?

So far man has been engaged industriously, heroically fighting against himself. And let us not unduly disparage that business, or be blind to the merits of it. War has welded tribes into states, and states into empires. It has made the map of the world. It has developed some of the greatest human qualities. War is the game in which man puts his all at risk. He faces the last extremities—hungers, maimings, tortures, death. And he has faced it all with such marvellous coolness. The human emotions, the human possibilities here reach their limit. That is why the

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story of man's fightings is amongst the world's great literature. Here is play with the stakes at the highest. Shall we ever tire of Homer, of Livy, of the legend of Arthur and Roland, of old Commynes? Will the great fighters ever cease to hold us—Alexander and Cæsar, Cromwell and William the Silent? War stretches man to his uttermost. It searches the nations and finds out all their strength and their weakness. One can understand that saying of stout old Manteuffel: "That elevated sentiment of commanding in battle; of knowing that the bullet of the enemy may call you any moment before God's tribunal; of knowing that the fate of the battle, and consequently the destiny of your country, may depend upon the orders you give—this tension of mind and of feeling is divinely great."

And while the military spirit has done so much in the development of the heroic, the daring side of human nature, one has also to admit its achievements in another direction. **L**The conquests of Alexander spread the Greek civilisation through East and West. Had it not been for Charles Martel's stand against the Saracens at Tours we might to-day, as Gibbon puts it, have Mohammedan doctors teaching their creed at Oxford. Drake's fight against the Armada saved England from the Spaniard and the Pope. It was fighting that gave the Dutch Republic its being and liberty; that secured Italy its unity and freedom; that at Trafalgar and Waterloo broke the despotism of Napoleon. The world's liberties, so far, have been cemented with blood. **L**And if there were no other way of getting or securing them; if also there were no other way of keeping the human soul



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and body at their loftiest temper, the desperate game would have to go on.

But that is precisely the question which is to-day emerging. For a new factor has now come into view, into operation. Indeed, there are several new factors. One is the modern sense of the economy of force, of getting the largest result for the least expenditure. And this helps us to see the enormous waste of war. Its results, as compared with the cost, remind one of Charles Lamb's essay on Roast Pig, where the Chinese in his story, knowing no other method, burn down the house in order to roast the pig. Courage, heroism, discipline, we all agree are good things; liberty and civilisation are good things. But is there no other way of getting them without this bloody one? Cannot we roast our pig without arson? In this method there are so many things that are not good. Wounds and maimings and premature deaths are not good; nor hatreds and ferocities; nor the sack of towns, nor the stoppage of trade, nor the wholesale making of widows and orphans. Let anyone dip into the history of the Thirty Years' War, of the sack of Magdeburg under Tilly; or read of the night at Lubeck after Blucher's defeat there; or of what our English wrought at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo; or of the retreat from Moscow—to take modern instances—and ask whether such scenes can be roads to any human good. Lord Shaftesbury once, at a public meeting, told of a conversation he had had with Wellington when they were travelling together through the Midlands. "Imagine," said the Duke, "what I should have had to do with this country if I were defending



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it against an invader ! I should have to tear up this railroad, pull down the bridges, burn the homesteads, carry off the crops, turn the land into an utter wilderness. And that to defend the country ! ” And the army itself—is it a school of manliness ? Do we look to the barracks for our moral ideals ? Who was it who described the military life as “ ennui tempered by homicide ” ? “ Yes, Mr. Bull,” exclaims Carlyle in “ Latter Day Pamphlets,” “ the money can be wasted in hundreds of millions, which certainly is something. But the strenuously organised idleness, and what mischief that amounts to—have you computed it ? ” Again, we say, a costly way of getting our roast pig.

But there is another feature of our time which is making all the difference to the outlook of militarism, and that is the rapidly-growing sense of human solidarity. In the earlier days men fought because they were strangers to each other. To a late date even, the Frenchman, the Russian, the Chinaman, the Japanese were as alien, as remote from our sympathy as though they were Martians. Ignorance is the great breeder of hostility, and every nation was ignorant of every other. To-day we know one another, and discover to our astonishment that we are all alike ; we read each other’s literature and find our hearts beat to the same tune. “ Don’t introduce me to that man,” said Charles Lamb once. “ I want to hate him, and you can’t hate a man you know.” Now men from all sides of the world are being introduced to each other, and with Lamb’s predicted result. And with that discovery has come another ; that the foes to fight are not these brother men, but the enemies of man.

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He has enough without inventing any. The untamed forces of nature ; her storms, her pestilences, her separating wastes, her savage beasts, her poisonous miasmas, her insect pests—here are enemies enough. Against man stands the unconquered universe of things, silent, mysterious, so often hostile ; yet, as he finds, waiting to be tamed and turned into a friend. And in this contest he finds that every step gained, every victory won, becomes a boon not to this or that nation, but always to humanity entire. The scientific discovery is never a sectional one ; it is a gift for all. The advance here, in power and in happiness, is an advance of the world.

And as we realise this we turn upon our militarism with a new wonderment. We survey the vast and elaborate apparatus ; these warships, these armed battalions, these stupendous artilleries, these millions of money, these disciplines and organisings, to which men are giving their best brains and their best resources, and ask, " What is all this for ? Is it then for man's fight against nature ? Has he armed himself so completely in order that he may push his forces into her unoccupied realms ; that he may stamp out her plagues, wring from her her secrets, and gain new footholds of power ? " And we can scarcely believe the answer, so utterly insane does it appear, which tells us that the system's one end and object is the killing or maiming of ourselves ! These guns are to shoot us down, these bayonets to stab us with, these bombs to blow our limbs to pieces. The whole apparatus is not to advance, but to desolate the world. The thing seems a ghastly joke. When the world's slow sense of

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humour has fully awakened to it, and to the way in which man has been made the victim of it, the jest will have had its day.

But here comes the question which faced us at the beginning. If militarism ends, where is your substitute? In what other school will you teach the hardihood, the heroic courage, the contempt of death, with which the old fighting spirit has always been credited? It has produced these, though with much else that does not sound so well. It is the question which tormented the Christian soul of Henri Perreyve. "If only all the strength, the science, the courage, the genius, the heroism, the brave blood expended in one great battle could be used in accordance with the knowledge and inspiration of God!" Ruskin had pondered the same problem, and in "Sesame and Lilies" in part answers it. He asks why we should not "bring up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise; organise, drill, maintain with pay armies of thinkers instead of armies of stabbers; give prizes for a fair shot at a fact, as well as for a leaden splash on a target?"

The next stage in the human evolution, it may be predicted, will be the search for, and the finding of, efficient substitutes for all that militarism has accomplished in the training of man. The advocates of conscription point out what it does for a nation's youth. It has its eye on every citizen, and allows no life to go to waste unnoted. It tells every man he is somebody, who must do his best for the State. It teaches him to stand, to march, to handle arms, to obey orders, to endure fatigue, to act in unison

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with others ; in short, it procures for the State a trained and disciplined people. And there is something in that—a great deal, in fact.

We want a trained and disciplined people ; a muscular, full-blooded and courageous people ; a people that can use its weapons and aim straight. But—and here the whole question comes—are the only weapons guns and bayonets ? When we are taught to aim straight, shall the only target be the bodies of our fellow-men ? Are not the mattock and plough as good for human handling as sword and gun ? Aim skilfully with them at Mother Earth, and the results, in turning wildernesses into fruitful fields, are surely as good as the maiming of limbs and the beating out of brains ! Does not nature offer us a field for all our courage and all our skill ? To tunnel her mountains, drain her swamps, combat her diseases, explore her unknown territories ; to become masters of her sea and land, of her heights above and depths beneath ; to wring from her those jealously guarded secrets which, once disclosed, will make man into superman—is there not enough in this warfare to call out all of strength and daring there is in us ?

Instead of the conscripts of slaughter we are to have the conscripts of industry, the conscripts of human development. The militarists are right in demanding national organisation, a training system which lets no individual escape. But let us have the right training and for the right objects. In previous ages man has been marvellously industrious and marvellously brave in the business of making his brother man miserable.

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We want now all that industry and all that courage in making him happy. After his ages of madness let him begin his period of sanity. After placing his valour, his civilisation, his religion so long at the devil's service, let him, for a change, place them at his own service. For countless centuries, having so badly missed his way, he has wandered in the wilderness. But now Canaan is in full view.

## XXX

### LIBERTY

LIBERTY is the magic word that stirs all hearts, but there is no word that has created so many illusions. So often has its light turned out to be a will-o'-the-wisp, leading into the morass. "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" exclaimed Mme. Roland on her way to the scaffold. "Crimes," yes; and what blunders! To the famine-stricken French people of the Revolution the liberty they fought for was a liberty to fill their stomachs with bread. To get it they took the Bastille, cut off the King's head and a great many other heads, to find as the result that there was less bread than before. There have been the oddest notions of liberty. Montesquieu, speaking of the Russia of his day, says: "Some of these people have for a long time taken liberty to mean the right to wear a long beard." To the convicts of Dartmoor liberty means the getting out of Dartmoor. To philosophers the word stands for endless wrangles as to how the will works—whether by a free choice or by the compulsion of causal necessity. In the dreams of the maid-of-all-work liberty is the coming into money, and no more scrubbing for ever and ever.

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Yet, amid all the dreams and all the illusions, all the wrong and all the ludicrous interpretations, the word still sings in the human ear as its sweetest music, stands as the sign of an inextinguishable hope. Men of all grades stretch towards this thing as the goal of progress. With varying degrees of clearness it means for them the state in which, free from barriers and obstructions, they can reach their highest, do their best, live their fullest. And our faith is that humanity will win to that, though not yet. The world is at present in labour with this idea, but before the actual birth of it we may look for all manner of uncouth embryonic developments.

To-day we are, on this subject, all immersed in the concrete. We are asking what is man's proper liberty, as an individual and as a member of society? And the question puzzles us sorely. Civilisation has burst all its old bonds. Within the last century vast new movements have come, revolutions of the social order, which have upset our old notions, and are compelling a rearrangement of ideas. To take, for instance, our present industrial condition. What is here our doctrine of freedom? Here our teaching has come, not from internal speculation, but from the sheer weight of facts, from new movements of life. The upsetting fact has been the introduction and development of machinery and all that has followed from it. At the end of the eighteenth century the manufacture of cottons and woollens was a domestic affair. The processes were carried on by a man and his family working in their own dwelling. And it was, on the whole, a wholesome affair, where the workers main-



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tained a fairly high standard of comfort and independence. Then came the inventions of Watt and Boulton and Crompton and Arkwright, the advent of steam and iron and steel, which broke up the habits of centuries. The machine appeared which could do the work of a hundred men, and increase production a thousandfold. Now were manufactured not only cottons and woollens, but an entirely new social order. Instead of the home industries we see men, women and children crowded into factories, the quiet villages developed into smoky towns, the whole world turned into a market for this enormous output.

And with this change came a new application of the word "liberty." The manufacturer claimed liberty to carry on his production in his own way; liberty to make all the profit he could. Especially must he be free in the labour market, free to press into his service, and on his own terms, all the working force available. It was a glorious liberty; a liberty which brought him in returns of hundreds and even thousands per cent. But what of the workers? For years and decades of years we had in our manufacturing centres a condition of things compared with which African savagery and American slavery were a paradise. Children were transferred in large numbers to the North, where they were housed in pent-up buildings adjoining the factories, and kept to incredible hours of labour. Work was carried on day and night; the children's beds were never cold, one batch being sent to the looms while the others snatched their brief hours of sleep. In the mines, children of seven, six, and even four years of age were found at work.

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The men, it is said, "died off like rotten sheep"; we may imagine what was the chance of the women and the little ones. Dante, could he have seen these things, would certainly have made of them a special place in his *Inferno*. The liberty to get rich, if even by massacre, seemed the one prevailing passion.

It was out of this sordid, horrible experience that England at last began to learn its modern lesson of industrial liberty. It learned that one of the conditions of it is restraint, and, if need be, coercion. It took a Socialist Owen, a Radical Hobhouse, an aristocratic Shaftesbury, to define its boundaries. In our modern Factory Acts, inspectorships, Workshop Regulation Acts, and similar measures, we have expressed the principle, never again to be contravened, that there shall be no freedom to oppress one's fellow; that there shall be no liberty of one class founded on the slavery of another; that liberty, worthy of the name, must be for all, and not for a few at the expense of all. The principle has been established, but we are only at the beginning of its applications. We shall not have reached the end till the whole community has been welded into a new organism, in which every member is a free and honoured unit, rendering to it his best service, and receiving from it his full share of its magnificent and ever-augmenting fund of wealth and life.

Let us turn to another of our modern liberty-problems, that of freedom of opinion. "Give me," says Milton, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." And he pleads for that liberty with a

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passion, with a moving magnificence that make the "Areopagitica" one of the noblest of our English prose classics. It is the note of the modern world. The bottom fact of Protestantism was its proclamation of the right of private judgment. From this, which Rome still proclaims as the most damnable of all heresies, has come that great bound upward of the human intellect—the discoveries, the inventions, the cosmic science—which in these last centuries has given us a new universe. We have learned that the only true authority is the authority of truth. We can trust the mind with freedom because we find that freedom is everywhere according to law.

Lecky, in his History of European Rationalism, has shown how, against this principle, dogmatism has for ages been fighting a losing battle. But it is being menaced to-day from a new quarter. Perhaps the greatest teacher of the modern world, for good or ill, is the Press, and it is worth while to consider the present position and immediate future of the Press. The newspaper is the pulpit of to-day. The Church rostrum is occupied on Sundays, preaching there to rapidly diminishing audiences. But this other pulpit is filled six days in the week, morning and evening, and its audiences are practically the entire population. Its *personnel* is a singular one. For the Church ministry a man is supposed to have a long and special training. His personal character is subjected to rigorous investigation. He is expected to be both moral and spiritual. But the journalist comes from nobody knows or cares where. His private life is nobody's business. The one condition

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required of him is that he can write things that sell. It is, when one thinks of it, an extraordinary state of affairs, and one may take it as a tribute to the healthiness of the general consciousness that this haphazard, unlicensed, irresponsible ministry has, on the whole, done its work so well. It has reflected the national conscience, and has often guided and enlightened it.

But a new condition is emerging, full of menace to its best work. Its liberty is threatened by capital and monopoly. Up to a few years ago the Press stood as an honest record of opinion. The opinion was of various kinds, representing all shades of political and social thinking. The great newspapers fought for their cause, whatever it was. Their staff was recruited from men who believed in the cause, who put into the work the enthusiasm of their ideals. The public read what the writers genuinely thought. But to-day the system of trusts and monopolies, which is crushing out the independent industries, is casting its baleful shadow over the realm of thinking. Capitalism is swallowing the independent newspaper. The millionaire or the syndicate buys up the old local organs and turns them into a multiple megaphone, which drowns all other voices in its deafening preaching of selfish interests. It is a wondrous spectacle—with an irresistibly comic side—this, of your humble wage-earner, your London clerk, devouring morning by morning the gospel proclaimed to him by his guide, the multi-millionaire. One wonders what will be the outcome. Will the scholar, the original thinker, the man of conscience and conviction, continue in the

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ranks, or be drawn to them, as the servants of such a system, or will journalism be reduced to a mob of hirelings, ready to suppress truth, to propagate lies, to damn their own souls at the bidding of these masters?

The symptoms are threatening, but we doubt if this will be their outcome. The nature of things is, as the Americans say, up against it. Truth, however it may be handicapped, has a way of conquering falsehood, of inflicting upon it final and annihilating defeats. Permanently to deceive a nation is a task too big even for limitless dollars. The nation in the end rends its deceivers. And before any such consummation were reached there would, we may confidently predict, be a strike of writers. Machinery may destroy thought—as when, for instance, it cuts off the head of the thinker—but, happily, it cannot create it. Your Hoe machine may roll for ever, but it will not, of itself, roll out ideas. Without thoughts the biggest combination of capital cannot produce a newspaper. The writers have only to declare, in unison, that their thought within the proper limits shall be free, or not available for the Hoe machine, and the battle is won.

Thus much of liberty in the pulpit outside the church. What of the pulpit inside it? On this theme Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying" might, in our day, be read with much profit by both preachers and hearers. And side by side with it might be taken that saying of one of the noblest of Christian thinkers, Pascal, that the greatest of Christian truths is that truth be loved above all. We have hardly attained

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that virtue yet. Jowett of Balliol, when speaking of his own communion, utters what seems too sweeping a condemnation when he says: "I feel convinced that, sooner or later, the Church of England will find it impossible to subsist on a fabric of falsehood and fiction." But there has been, there and elsewhere, too much of ecclesiastical subterfuge. Why do we talk so unctuously of "Christian truth"? Do we need the adjective? If a thing is true, is not that enough? If it is not true, no adjective will save it. The pulpit will only hold men as it is itself held by the truth.

In our separate lives the true liberty for you and me is the liberty to grow and to serve. As Cicero puts it, "We are servants of all the laws in order that we may be free." We have to learn, as Franklin tells us he learned from his early excesses, that things are wrong not because they are prohibited, but prohibited because they are wrong. As the pianist gets his freedom of execution by obeying all the rules, so we reach the liberty of our universe by meeting all its requirements. There is no other way of it; thus and thus only do we reach that sphere of the infinite life which an apostle has described for us as "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

## XXXI

### RETROSPECT

OUR life, as it passes, brings us into contact with wonderful things, but there is nothing so wonderful as the life itself. Why we came to be here, where we are, and what we are, that is the immense, the ever inexplicable thing. That this collection of faculties and sensibilities ; these five senses, this memory, this imagination, this will, should have been compressed into the personality we call " I " ; should be thrust into this queer complex of flesh and blood, and set going for a brief span of years on this bit of a planet, the fragment of an immeasurable universe, and then to disappear, to drop back into the eternity from which it came—what are we to make of all that ? We did not ask for existence ; certainly not for this kind of existence, but here it is. We might, for aught we can see, have been anything else, or anywhere else. There are probably dwellers in planets whirling round Sirius, or other of the myriad stars in the sky, revolving the same question, met by the same puzzle. Inside the visible universe there may be countless invisible ones, sphere within sphere, recognisable by other forms of perception, yet conscious, vastly more conscious, than we are. There are within our own range of vision myriads of other lives—ephemeræ, birds, beasts—



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all of them, like ourselves, projected into life, their place, their limits fixed, without any willing or knowing of their own. We are full to-day of the question of representative government ; of the referendum ; of people having a voice in the management of their affairs. The government we are actually under, the cosmic government, which has decided everything for us, is anything but that. It is the dumbest of governments. It does everything and says nothing. It is a queer business, which we have to make the best of.

But if the government is despotic, it is a despotism of benevolence. If we have no vote, it is evidently because our vote would be worth so little ; would be, in fact, a confusion, and not a help. The scheme is too vast for our electoral wisdom. That what is offered us is good, even to our own thinking, is evident from the fact that we hug the gift so closely. The worst penalty we can inflict on a man is a sentence of death. When men weary of life, as some do, it is not because they have too much of it, but too little. It is when its fires run low, when vitality has ebbed, when its opportunities close through defect of power, that they call for a change. Reclothe them with the old vigour, and they would want to go on. Life-weariness is the feeling of the tired child, who, after a frolicsome day, calls fretfully for its sleep. But that is no reflection on the day. It is an affair of exhausted nerves, that want recuperation.

Life is to be judged, not from its emptiness, but from its fulness. Of all visible things on this planet, we possess it in its highest quality. One is awestricken

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in contemplating the immensity of the inheritance of which we are put in possession. That we can think eternity makes us, in a very real sense, eternal. Immensity and eternity meet in us, for we are the living embodiments of their idea. Our actual existence here is a mere flash, but it has these things behind it and interpenetrating it. Deprive man, if you will, of his God, of his religious hopes, you can never deprive him of these infinite relations. They are of the structure of his soul. Wherever that came from, it brought these things with it, and in it. Man stands on time, but always to look beyond it.

Life is so full, so complex an affair, that it is impossible to sum it under any one aspect. There are a thousand standpoints from which to view it, each one offering a new picture. We may talk of it as a gift, or as a journey, or as an enjoyment, or as an endurance, or as a struggle. *Vivere est militare*. Let us think of it here as an experience. For that we need a good stretch of years behind us. Not that old men are to be taken as the only true witnesses. Often they are false ones; for they write out of a condition, a temperament which may represent something very different from their best. A man is so many times himself. As Sainte-Beuve says: "Every day I change. . . . Before the final death of the mobile being who calls himself by my name, how many men will already have died in me!" An appraisalment of life, to be true, needs the testimony of youth and of middle age, as well as of its later years. The best witness is that of men who, having a sufficiently long experience of life's varying phases, can retain and

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reconstruct for themselves the consciousness of them all. When a man is fifty he ought to know himself fairly well. We must have more vitality than our ancestors, for so many of them write of themselves as practically done with by that time. Montaigne considered himself old at fifty. Erasmus has the same view. He says: "I am now fifty, a term of life which many do not reach, and I cannot complain that I have not lived long enough." Béranger, in some dismal lines, speaks of what awaits him—gout, blindness, deafness, imbecility—all in view of the fact that, as he puts it, "*J'ai cinquante ans.*"

Some of us have gone a long way beyond that, and yet feel no inclination to sing dirges. We have not much future before us, so far as this world is concerned. In compensation there is a rich past behind us, of which we are competent to form some judgments. The retrospect has some delights of its own. Not the least is the consciousness that the thing, such as it is, has been fairly and safely got through. We ought to make more of this than some of us appear to do. The present, the future, these are affairs of struggle, of doubts and fears, of infinite uncertainties. But the past, that is beyond the reach of fate. Not the gods, as Horace somewhere has it, can rob us of it. The picture is by no means all we could wish—no artist is satisfied with his picture—but it has been actually painted and hung on the line. We were sent here to paint it, and the universe would not have been complete without it. Fear so often shadows the prospect that it is an immense relief to know a part of our life from which fear has for ever fled. Nothing can happen to

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that past of ours ; it all *has* happened. You can go over every foot of the ground, sure that no unknown enemy will break out on you there. How horribly we were afraid as we turned some of the corners of it ! But we are not afraid now. The foe has done his worst, and yet here we are !

One of the chief lessons of the retrospect, indeed, is to teach us not to be afraid. Think of all the fears that in succession have haunted us during that fifty years, if we have lived so long ! What has become of them ? “ I have had a great deal of trouble in my life,” said a dying man to his children, “ and most of it has never happened.” Many young people start in a panic. Taine writes of himself at twenty-one : “ My only consolation is that the game will only last forty or fifty years at most, and that at the end of it all is rest, eternal sleep, I hope.” But Taine found abundant satisfaction in his after career. The present writer—if a personal reminiscence may be permitted—at the mature age of seventeen was convinced he would never be able to earn a living. When the parental support had gone he must sink into destitution. It did not turn out so. Later, as a student for the ministry, he was equally certain that his aversion to certain tenets of the old theology would wreck his career. As a matter of fact, from the beginning of his ministry—in the pulpit and elsewhere—until now, he has uttered his whole heart and has found no hurt. We are dealt with, it seems, with a kind of quiet humour. The things we dreaded do not happen ; what hits us hardest is nearly always something quite unlooked for. How queerly, almost absurdly, things

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turn out ! Napoleon, at twenty-five, in a letter to a friend says : " To live quietly, to enjoy family affections, on about £200 a year, there, my friend, is the kind of life one should look for." The hero of a hundred fights, the conqueror of Europe, the receiver of imperial revenues, the centre of a world's politics, looks forward at the beginning, as his ideal, to " a quiet life, to family affections and two hundred a year ! " The experience of the aged should teach the young to be brave. Life will not hurt them. Innumerable lions roar along the path of the pilgrim. When we get up to them we find they are chained. St. Bernard, who knew something of hardship, came to a conclusion we may all take note of : " Nothing can harm me except myself. . . . Never am I a real sufferer but by my own fault." The strange thing is that the elders, after so long an experience of the kindness of things, still carry their fears. How horribly afraid of death was Dr. Johnson ! And yet how simple a business was that last falling asleep when it came to him ! The saintly Perreyve was hag-ridden by the same fear. But note his words when the time came : " How happy I am now that I know I am dying ! "

People torment themselves with all manner of illusions. Pessimists take it as a certain proof of the worthlessness of life that people do not want to live their lives over again. Many do not, or say they do not. It is recorded of Dr. Parker that, preaching on his seventy-first birthday, he told his congregation that he had been asked whether he would like to have those years all over again, to which he had replied, " Not for ten million worlds." Dr. Parker was a man of

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many moods, and half a dozen different souls seemed to speak at times through that complex personality. But if his words here were from his settled conviction, they are in no sense an arraignment of life. That people do not want to traverse the same ground over again is no verdict on the journey itself. Men do not want to go backward, and for the reason that they want to go forward. When you have reached Leeds on the way to Scotland, you do not return to repeat the journey. But that is no condemnation of the road from London to Leeds. Our eyes are in front, and not at the back of our heads. "Forward is our watchword." "We have done this, now let us do that." The argument here is simply against a stale repetition. It misses fire entirely as against the good of living.

The backward look on life gives a good opportunity for judging of what Loisy finely calls "the moral worth of the universe." If anything, in such a review, stands out with sunbright clearness, it is the essentially spiritual system under which we live. We have in succession all sorts of pleasures offered us. The right moment for appraising them is not when we are sipping the foaming draught. It is the moment after, or, still better, that farther moment when we contemplate them from the distance of years. We get then the true flavour of actions. It is the after-taste that counts. And what are these verdicts? We find that while mere animal gratification leaves nothing, or next to nothing, for the soul, the things we have done out of our faith, our love, our spirit of sacrifice, create in us an afterwards of purest joy. That, we find, is how we are made. This law, of the



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after-results of things, is as sure, as inexorable as gravitation. Its operation shows us the kind of universe we are in. If things are like that, then the Power behind them is like that.

By all that He requires of me,  
I know what He Himself must be.

This is not to say that the lighter pleasures are under ban. Life's retrospect, if we bring a clear mind to it, shows us a scheme of things whose infinite variety invites and calls out a like variety of response. Nature enjoys her frolics and bids us enjoy ours. She did not set her lambs frisking, her parrots mocking, her monkeys grimacing, for nothing. They are outcomes of her joyous heart. Man's sense of the ridiculous belongs to theology as much as his passion and his woe. There is a feeling of the inmost truth of things in what Sir James Stephen says of Coleridge's view of life : " The result was a sort of filial confidence in the kindness of God which permitted and even encouraged something not dissimilar from the light-hearted frolic which it is my greatest happiness to see my children enjoying in my company, and under such parental control as I am obliged to use." But this must not prevent us from recognising that life is a great and serious affair, not to be expressed in trivialities. You may jest in life, but you are not to make life a jest. You will miss the best of it if you do.

In a review of our past the one thing that gives it coherence, meaning, purpose, is when we regard it as the development in us of a personality, the growth of a soul. One pities the people who forget this : one wonders what their final thoughts will be. William



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Law, in his "Serious Call," depicts the life of a fashionable woman of his time: "If she lives thirty years in this way, she will have spent fifteen in bed and fourteen in eating, drinking, dressing and visiting, reading plays and romances, and going to the theatre." That is a pitiful story, the story of so many in our day. In studying the lives of such people we are ready to excuse that Council of the sixth century which seriously debated the question whether women had souls! Whether we be men or women, let us be sure of this, that there is nothing else worth having or worth developing. And our age, with all its defects and difficulties, is, if we give it and ourselves a chance, a splendid one for the soul. There has been no better for the growth of faith. We have revolutionised all the grounds of faith, upset our old theologies, turned our Bibles inside out, and all this to find our faith, as the inspiration of our living, more deeply rooted than ever before. And it is life which has taught us this; life, whose vicissitudes have revealed to us the Divine guidance; whose experiences have shown us where the real values, the hidden treasures, lie; life, whose hard fight has thrown us back upon God, as our only refuge and strength; life, whose divine character and glorious possibilities have been revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the name which is and will ever remain, humanity's dearest possession, the soul of its soul.

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